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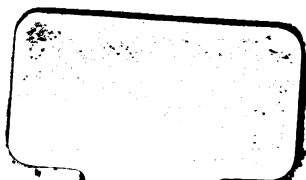
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THE NAVIGATION
OF
THE EUPHRATES AND TIGRIS,
&c. &c.

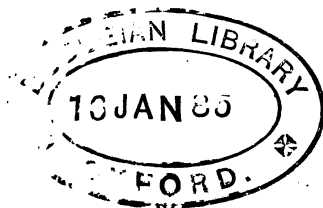
THE NAVIGATION
OF THE
EUPHRATES AND TIGRIS
AND THE
POLITICAL RIGHTS OF ENGLAND
THEREON,
WITH
AN ACCOUNT OF PERSONAL TRAVELS,
AND ORIENTAL NOTICES FROM
ARAB AUTHORS.

BY
THOMAS KERR LYNCH, F.R.G.S.
LATE CONSUL-GENERAL FOR PERSIA.

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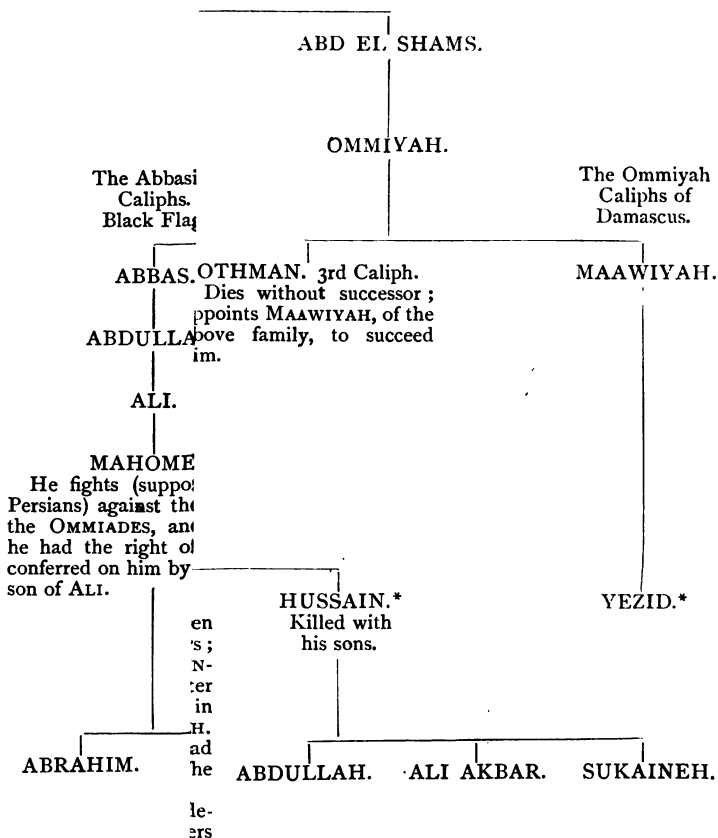
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ISLAM.



* These were the two aspirants to the Caliphate. Hussain is massacred on the plains of Kerbela.

PART I.

TRADE ON THE TIGRIS

IN THE 'AYAM-EL-JAHILEYAH,'*
BEFORE THE AGE OF STEAM.

CHAPTER I.

THE TIGRIS BELOW BAGHDAD.

'I love all waste and desolate places
Where what we see is boundless,
As we wish our souls to be.'—SHELLEY.

THE only way to study attentively the country comprising Lower Mesopotamia and the famous regions north of the Persian Gulf, is to traverse it on horseback, or to go down the Tigris in a native craft, in order that, while quietly descending the stream, one would become better acquainted with the tribes on its banks, understand their mode of life, their power, their position with regard to the Turkish Government, and the nature of its commerce, and of the fines (or black-mail) which their chiefs exact from the traffic on the river between the cities of Baghdad and Bussoreh. I had, on several occasions,

* 'Ayam-el-Jahileyah,' the Age of Ignorance,—the period before Islam of Mahomedan writers.

B

journeyed along the plains on the east and on the west, but had little communication with the natives, as they are principally found on the rivers, the great arteries of the country, so I resolved to engage two boats, the names of which I must record, as they will take a very prominent place in this record.

The *Hadedeyah* and *Wananah* were both large vessels, built of teak-wood, of from 80 to 100 tons burden, with long crescent-shaped stems and lofty poop, the latter comprising the only cabin for passengers; the upper streak is ornamented by figures or letters nicely carved in relief; the centre of the boat is always appropriated to cargo; but their most constant employ is secured by the traffic in firewood, which they convey up the river to Baghdad. The masts of these boats are of an enormous size, imported from the Malabar coast of India, and yet they appear none too large to support the ponderous crescent-shaped yard and huge white sail which they spread to catch the light breezes peculiar to the deserts of the Euphrates. These boats, from the loftiness of their sails, look fine and remarkably interesting when seen from the plains inland in early summer, when the river is high. Their crew consists of about thirty Arabs,—fifteen trackers, who when winds and currents were unfavourable had to track the craft along, and fifteen matchlock-men, Arabs of Bedouin descent: these never track, but assist in hoisting the sail, and act as guard in case of attack. As neither town nor

bazaar existed for the whole route, and we were committing ourselves to the desert as to the open sea, we were obliged to take in provisions for twenty-five days, and in addition a stock of dates, pipes, and presents of various kinds for any marauding chief whose rapacity we should have occasion to buy off.

We started on the 12th March with a fair wind, the collective crews formed themselves into a choir led by a man playing on the tambourine; they danced along the gunwale and cargo and sang Arab songs: as some hoisted the sail, and as they fired off their guns and threw into every conceivable posture their naked arms and legs, a wilder scene could scarcely be imagined.

There was plenty of water in the river, the spring rise had well commenced. The Tigris is at its lowest point during the months of July, August, and September, at which period, in some places, it can only be navigated by light boats drawing not more than three feet of water. The navigation is carried on during these months by craft of this draught, but even then with difficulty, owing to the continually shifting channel. At the beginning of October the course and channel of the river become clearly defined and deepened, when navigation is easier; the first rains in the hills begin to fall and affect the current, which, flowing more rapidly, increases the depth of water in the shoal places. After the middle of November the rise of the river commences. It is at this season that large boats, which draw, when laden, generally from five to

six feet of water, begin their trade ; they descend the stream with light cargoes (seldom profitable) to Bussoreh, and wait there until a fleet is formed for mutual protection. In February or March they start for Baghdad, a journey of two months, or at least forty days, laden with the produce of India, Java, and China, conveyed to Bussoreh in buggaloes and Dutch vessels from Batavia. They reach Baghdad in March, April, and May, when they find the river at its flood almost on a level with the surrounding country, and have often to sound for its channel through a sea formed by its inundations.

The banks of the Tigris present to the view dark, alluvial, muddy shores, lined by numerous boats, surmounted by brick walls and low houses. The domes and minarets of the mosques rise as we proceed into the mid-stream ; single date-trees, with their waving foliage, vie in loftiness with the latter. A bridge of twenty-six boats connects both banks, just beyond which, on the left, a very picturesque, half-broken dome raises, what is left of its canopy, above the water, revealing to the navigator the interior of some once sacred shrine. On the same bank rises a modern-looking, pent-roofed building, erected on solid foundations of brick masonry, called the Serai, which is the Government House, where the Pasha resides. The city of Baghdad, properly so called, the Custom-house, and other public buildings, &c., are also on the east side of the river.

Masses of structures, of brick masonry, the ruins of ancient buildings, form prominent objects in several places on the opposite side of the river, jutting out in cliffs and obstructing its passage through Baghdad : those to the north are very high, and are surmounted by graves, at the extreme point of which, right above the expanse of this noble stream, the white dome of an Imaum of Khudder Elias is very conspicuous. In some places the Arabs have taken advantage of this old masonry to serve as a foundation on which they can erect a framework over the stream, supporting large wooden rollers for raising water for the irrigation of the adjoining gardens. These artificial cliffs are the ruins of Baghdad under the Caliphate, and may have existed long before, even in a Babylonian era, since they abound in bricks bearing the cuneiform inscription.* The river is, however, seldom confined by masonry, but allowed to form its natural banks of hard dark clay, which are crowded with horsemen and water-carriers. Huge leather sacks of water hang over the backs of horses and mules; here and there sheepskins filled with water are balanced on the backs of donkeys by expert men and boys; Arab men, women, and children, fringe the edge of the water. Where the principal streets lead down to the river the bank is generally a public thoroughfare, and rustic

* Several of these bricks were sent to England by the author in 1848; the inscription is said to be, 'Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabonassar.'

cafés are formed by enterprising coffee-dealers, in which the poorer Arab merchants sit, smoke their pipes, and drink coffee, enjoying the cool breeze, the prospect over a beautiful river, and the freshness of the water-side, much to be envied by their richer and more aristocratic brethren, who could not well resort there.

The Tigris is a noble river, and the brilliancy of the atmosphere adds much to its enjoyment. On the west bank, which is the Arab quarter, miserable houses, mud walls, lofty date-gardens and lanes, were passed in succession as we dropped down the stream. Part of the old wall is still traceable. The tomb of Zobeydeh, wife of Haroun-el-Rasheed, raising its lofty pinnacle in true Saracenic style, and the tomb of Sheikh Maaruf, a fine, handsome mosque, the Arab mausoleum in which the sheikhs of the desert are interred, successively open to the view on the right bank, and as characteristic features command attention rising above the general outline, the other details of which have little of the bold or architectural, Oriental taste confining itself rather to the embellishment of the interior of their houses in the harems and courts than to external decorations.

The Tigris flows south-east through the town, and continues in this direction some distance below the city, when it turns almost due west. Date-groves covered the banks on either side, and hung in dark masses in the bend over the stream over the southern bank as we entered the next reach; on the northern

bank they extend only to the Masudi Canal,* which here joins the Tigris as it flows westward and opens out a view of the plains to the west of the city, and of the tomb of Zobeydeh, above mentioned. The Masudi Canal leaves the Euphrates about five miles north of Feluga Castle, and flowing by Ager Kuf, enters the Tigris west of Baghdad—it is the old Nahr Isa Canal. Both of these names are now lost, and it is by the Arabs of the present day called the Suglaweyah. When the Euphrates is at its flood the Turks have never been able to confine its waters within the proper limits ; it overflows its banks and floods the country, forming a marsh west of Baghdad, which extends northward from the end of this western reach to the gilt minarets and domes of Kazermain, which rise over a forest of date-trees at a distance of about five miles to the northward, to the westward of which again looms the venerable pile of Ager Kuf. The Khur, another stream, about forty yards wide, enters the Tigris on the same side, and was flowing rapidly into the river about a mile below the Masudi. Though twice the width of that classic canal, and with all the appearance of a noble river, it is yet but a mere outlet of the marsh formed by its overflow, as its name imports. After a long circuitous

* The Masudi Canal is one of the four which intersected this country between the Euphrates and the Tigris mentioned by ancient geographers and Arab writers, called by the latter Nahr Isa ; who suppose it to have been cut by Ali ibn Ullah, or by the Caliph Mansoor.

run to the westward, the river, leaving the date-groves and gardens, winds its solitary course through a deserted country to the north-east, to a garden on the left bank, called Gerarah, only an hour's walk from Baghdad. It took us, however, seven hours by water ; and as the wind was unfavourable we passed the night there in a house built by Colonel Taylor when a resident in this country. A large enclosure planted with date-trees is attached to the house, together with the usual irrigating wheels and wells. The English colony at Baghdad, if I may dignify them as such, generally encamp here during the month of October for the recreation of hunting and shooting, after having been immured in their crypt-like serdanbs during the heat of summer. Commodious tents and wooden bungaloes, called chardaghs, are erected on the banks of the river, the sides of which are of open frame-work, filled in with mats or camel-thorn, which being kept continually wet, cool the air passing into them.

Mounds of ruins are to be seen a little distance from the banks on the desert, which doubtless mark the site of the once populous town of Kelwatha,* mentioned by Arab geographers as being on the road from Baghdad to Modain. In them have been found sepulchral urns and sarcophagi in terra-cotta, and

* Kelwatha is mentioned by Abu-el-Feda as two farsackhs from Baghdad, and four from the Nahriwan, which assigns it to the left bank ; the same author says the Tigris flowed past it. The Caliphs had a hall at Baghdad which overlooked the gardens and groves of Kelwatha.—See Khuteeb's *History of Baghdad*.

bricks with cuneiform inscriptions, which having been discovered at the base of the *débris* denote the site of a Babylonian ruin.

On the following morning, at nine o'clock, we proceeded with a fine north-westerly breeze down the reach, passing two large walled-in date-groves on the left bank, and one or two on the right, but the latter were unenclosed and uncultivated. On the plains on either side was a marsh famous for boar-hunting, particularly that on the Gerarah side, and through the plain on the right I have traced with difficulty parts of the bed of the once famous Nahr-es-Sarsar Canal, which fell into the Tigris somewhere in this neighbourhood. In an hour, the wind being favourable, we came to the embouchure of the little river Dialeh, on the left bank, which flows from the Persian mountains and here falls into the Tigris; a clump of lofty date-trees rises over its stream, and marks where there is a ferry on the road from Baghdad to Ctesiphon, beyond which are some mounds which mark the site of Zaffraniah, of which we shall speak more fully when we notice the canal called Nahriwan. The angle formed by the Dialeh and the Tigris was occupied by a small number of black Arab tents, scarcely higher than the camel-thorn which surrounded them.

Here the river forms almost a right angle, and runs in one long reach south-westward towards two date-trees, which mark the tomb of Jaffer, the brother of the Caliph Ali. A small deserted garden, surrounded

by ruins, with a few dwarfed trees in it, which were once irrigated by a branch canal from the famous Nahr-el-Malcha, long since dry, is all that is to be seen. Thence the river runs south-east-by-east, and passing a long island, called Zimbraniyah, again impinges on the Baghdad and Ctesiphon road.

Veering sail as the reach turned south-west, we swept along the walls of Seleucia,* which jut on the river over the right bank; they consist of mounds of clay and sun-dried bricks, some thirty feet high, and very thick, so that a horseman can ride up the *débris* and on and along the top, without much difficulty. They present the form of a semicircle, with the river for a base, about two miles in extent. They are, in some places, washed down to the level of the plain by inundations, and are there only traceable by detached mounds. On the eastern bank of the Tigris the circuit of these walls can be traced, though less prominent, close to the river. The Tigris now cuts through the site of this once fine city, over which are observable mounds of great extent, some consisting of kiln-dried bricks, which are continually being conveyed in boats to Baghdad; no Babylonian bricks bearing the cuneiform inscription, or other interesting

* Seleucia, a Greek colony and the capital of Macedonian conquests in this part of Asia, contained at one time 600,000 inhabitants. It was built by Seleucus Nicator. It was a Christian See in the early ages of Christianity, and was in existence in the days of Odenathus, king of Palmyra, as the summer capital of the Arsacidæ.

antiquities, have been found here, corroborating history as to the more modern period when it flourished.

The waters of a great branch canal, drawn from the Nahriwan, watered the city ; its embankments, on the plain to the left, run at a tangent to the bend of the river, which at this place is called by the Arabs Gusaybah ; the Tak-i-Kesreh, and Imaums of Selman and Hudaifah, are visible beyond them.

On the right bank a marsh, formed by the spring floods of the Tigris, now occupies part of the site, and extends beyond the walls, where it swells into larger dimensions ; on its borders a few Jiboor Arabs had pitched their tents.

We dropped alongside the bank to examine this interesting spot, and I walked along the marsh beyond the walls to extensive mounds to the westward, indicating the ruins of a large city. To the north is a lofty, artificial, conical hill, surrounded by a dry ditch, called Tel Omar, which is visible from a great distance.* These latter ruins are seldom visited, being so far from the present course of the river (which at one time evidently flowed through the plain now occupied by this marsh) ; they are nevertheless very extensive and interesting, particularly this artificial hill, as commemorating the spot on which the victorious Arabs halted after the battle of Kadiseyah, and from which, seeing the great arch of Ctesiphon on the opposite bank of the Tigris, they shouted,

* See plan.

‘Behold the white hall of Chosroes! Behold the promise of God to His Prophet!’ From the existence of this mound and its name we may conclude that this was, as we have already premised, the site of the city of Seleucia, which was three miles west of Ctesiphon.

We returned to our boats. *Débris* of every description cover the banks. We passed a buttress of brickwork, which stands in the deepest part of the stream—the wash of ages has scarcely affected it; close by, on the right bank, are others, all of which denote that this was not the original bed of the river, but that it flowed, as above mentioned, to the west. Just below Seleucia we came to a low square building on the right, where they collect salt and ammonia and crystallise saltpetre, of which, as from all old places, the ruins supply an ample quantity. On passing it we came to the little tomb of Hudaifah,* on the left bank. The tomb, surmounted by a small dome, is in a walled enclosure, the usual solitary clump of date-trees rising beside it. A quarter of a mile to the east of this tomb stands the magnificent pile of the Tak-i-Kesreh, one of the most remarkable of ruins. An arch 104 feet high, 93 broad, and 180 deep, rises majestically on a vast plain, and the silence and solitude of the desert render its proportions more striking and rivet your admiration. The traveller can spend hours with pleasure examining this magnificent ruin, and if

* Hudaifah was an early follower of Mahomed, and is celebrated in Arab story for his veracity.

versed in the early history of Mahomedanism, and if he have made hunting excursions and chased the mighty boar, or roused the lion from his lair, with happy friends, as I have often done, he will pitch 'the tent of delicious memories on these plains;' and spend days and days among the ruins surrounding that mighty hall, which, looking towards the dead level of the eastern horizon, facing the rising sun, is really sublime. The tomb of Selman,* the slave and disciple of Mahomed, built like that of Hudaifah, is in the immediate vicinity, to the north of the Tak. Frequent pilgrimages are made to this spot by the Mahomedan population of Baghdad, particularly the barbers, who claim him as belonging to their profession. They bring their dead from all directions to be interred in this place, which is supposed to be hallowed by the sanctity of the tomb and the associations which cling to so noble a ruin.

The country round the Tak is a perfect wilderness; a thorny brake, the favourite haunt of the wild boar and jackal, is scattered in patches over the ground. Here I have heard the lions roaring at night, and observed the vulture watching the carrion from which the hyena has disturbed him; the bat and wild

* Selman, whose real name was Ranzabah, was a Persian of Ctesiphon, who, informed by a monk of the coming of Mahomed, became a believer, and was cast out by his people. On his way to Egypt he was captured and sold for a small sum, and subsequently became the property of Mahomed, who mentions him as one of his house.

pigeon nestle among the columns and arches which decorate the front of its noble façade, and the flapping of their wings as they leave their lofty abode, or the wild love-song of the Arab horseman, alone give life to this region, where the keeper of Selman's tomb is the only inhabitant to break the general character of the surrounding desolation.*

The early Abbaside Caliphs, when building Baghdad (distant 18 miles), obtained their materials from this place, but the Tak, it is said, defied all their efforts ; and Mansoor, finding the production of material on the spot less expensive, discontinued its demolition on the advice of his Persian Vizeer, who proposed that it should be preserved to demonstrate to posterity the power and majesty of the nations whom they had conquered. Khuteeb, in his *History of Baghdad*, describes its magnificence, and says that when the Arabs, under Saad ibn Abi Wakas, after the battle of Kadiseyah, took the city and burnt the

* Ctesiphon is said to have been built by Vardanes ; it became the capital of the Sassanians as Seleucia was that of the Arsacidæ. The Tak was built by Chosroes, who, it is supposed, procured a Byzantine architect for the purpose. This city and Seleucia are called by the Arabs Modain.—Khuteeb's *History of Baghdad*. Khuteeb says it was called Modain, from the number of cities the kings built there, and the Iwan was called اسانبر—Asanbar. Modain is the Arabic dual of مدن, Muden, a city. He enumerates Baghdad, Mudain, Anbar (on Euphrates), Nahrwan, Akbera, and Samarah, as the cities of his time.

great curtain that hung from the Iwan in front of the grand hall, they obtained ten thousand miscalls of gold from it. Arab writers also love to dwell, in their descriptions, on the magnificent carpet embroidered with flowers of jewels and branches of gold, which the last of the Sassanians left in that sumptuous hall, to be divided by the Caliph Omar amongst his Mussulman hordes.

Ctesiphon, or Modain, the winter residence of the kings of Parthia, which was taken and destroyed by the Arabs in the year A.D. 637,* was the mistress of the East and the rival of Rome during the most powerful period of that empire; she disputed with it the lawful possession of Mesopotamia, and the tide of conquest alternately flowed between the walls of Ctesiphon and Antioch. The successes of Severus, Trajan, Julian, and Heraclius—the first of whom took, and it is reported destroyed, the city—can scarcely efface the disgrace suffered by the Roman arms when commanded by Crassus; and the loss of their standards can scarcely be blotted from the history of a nation who proudly boasted that they would dictate terms of capitulation under the walls of Ctesiphon. Two Roman legions, in the reign of Nero, were made to pass under the yoke of their Parthian conquerors at

* The Emperor Julian besieged it, and took the famous cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, with Coche, which was a place of great strength, on the other side of the Tigris, and as it were the citadel of Ctesiphon.—*Ancient Universal History*, vol. xv. p. 481.

this place, and the story of the treatment of the Roman Emperor Valerian by Shapoor is familiar to every English reader.

Leaving Ctesiphon, and passing the little Imaum of Hudaifah, the river flows south, and makes a long, circuitous line, enclosing a neck of land about four miles in length. As the boats were obliged to lower sail during this immense circuit, we availed ourselves of the delay to go on shore and revisit the scene of many a hunting and shooting excursion ; for many a wild boar has fallen, pierced by the English lance, in this bight under the walls of the mighty Chosroes, and echoes of our boisterous sport have often filled the old ruin with life again.

Turning back, almost due north, the river flows round to the east of Ctesiphon, to a point (about a mile from the Tak) called the Bustan ; it appears to have been a square enclosed area (for what purpose it is difficult to ascertain), surrounded by a thick mud wall ; its name means a garden, two sides of which on the left bank alone remain, the rest having been swept away by the stream. The arch and its façade look well from this point.

On reaching the boats, the river turning south and the wind being favourable, we hoisted sail and left Ctesiphon behind us. About sunset we found ourselves in the long reach called Lej, running in a northerly direction, in which we were obliged to lower sail again, and lay-to for the night. Starting at daylight, we came

to the mud fort of Kaleh Sheikh Shammar on the left bank, and that of Baghdadiéh, or Kaleh Sheikh Zobaid, on the right, both of which were uninhabited. We met none of the Arab tribes whose castles are designated, or any human being, since leaving Gerarah. The general appearance of the country, presenting the same mud-banks about twelve feet high, and a wild, bare, or thorny desert extending up to them, is now monotonous in the extreme.

The Shammar Arabs roam over the plain between the river and the Persian frontier; they are called Toga ('a Necklace'), to distinguish them from the Shammar of the Jezira and Central Arabia, a pure Bedouin tribe. Allegiance to the government is seldom evinced when put to the test, they are wild and rapacious, and could turn out at least 1000 horsemen and 500 muskets. Their present Sheik his Sawud, but he has little influence, they are so broken up and divided amongst themselves.

The Zobaid Arabs are the dominant power on the right bank; they were once a powerful tribe, descended, they say, from Hamyar; which name is still kept alive among them. Their Sheikh Wadie was the first to assume a Turkish title and to reside in Baghdad; when his tribe became so scattered that various portions have since passed under other names and have become proverbial blackguards, such as the Maamerah, Dhuhayleyat, the Chelabeen (or dogs), &c., and having associated with Bedouin tribes from

the Euphrates, it would be next to impossible to give anything like a statistical account of them : they are said to be equal in number and strength to the Shammar, with whom they are now at feud.

The Wadie, as above mentioned, turning Turk, assisted the Pasha to put down the Khuzaal, one of the oldest and most powerful tribes on the Euphrates, who were in arms against the government, which had no force to quell or even encounter them ; but, awed by the prestige of the Sultan's name, they were beaten by the Wadie, and obliged to treat with the Turks, who swore on the Koran that their Sheikh was perfectly safe and free to come and go as he pleased. The Arab chief first sent his son, who, on his arrival, was immediately seized and sent off to Constantinople ; when forged letters were prepared, as if written by the Sheikh's son to his father, expatiating on the hospitalities he had received, and begging him to come in : to comply with which, considering the oath, required no great measure of faith on the part of the Arab, who immediately and unguardedly entered Baghdad, when he was seized and also sent to the capital. This treachery, practised unknown to the Wadie, raised the whole of his tribe, who drove him to the alternative of drawing his sword or of ever losing caste with his Arabs : he chose the former, and from having been vassal of the government he is proving very formidable. The few troops at the Pasha's command are now immured near Hillah, and

it is well his Arabs are not on the river ; they might have given us much trouble, and exacted money, dresses, &c., if the Wadie, or Samarmed his brother, who are my particular friends, were not at hand.

At Baghdadieh there is a dépôt for wood for the steamer belonging to Messrs. Lynch, which in their general marauding the Arabs left untouched, though its keeper, a Shammaree, had run away to Baghdad, as the Maamerah, a Zobaid tribe, were not far off.

After leaving Baghdadieh the river turns north; we had to lower our sail and track the boats. At 7.30 a.m. we entered the Guttaniah reaches, which implies that their banks were once famous for the production of cotton; they now lie fallow and deserted. At 8 a.m. we passed Rumailath, a series of mounds attesting ancient habitations, and at 9.15 came to Abdullah, an Imaum, on the right. The left bank is called Sayed, and further on takes the name of Brainage. No ruins exist to which these names attach; merely wild, uncultivated tracts. Below Brainage there is a long wooded island, on the extreme point of which we grounded, but, veering sail, had the good fortune to get off. We now passed Reddad on the left bank, which is the name of a vast jungle, through which an inlet from the Tigris floods the country, and forms a reedy marsh full of lions and wild boars. In the centre of this marsh there are ruins called Dair, where, in a buffalo track, a jar full of antique coins was found. I endeavoured to procure one or two of

them, to ascertain their era, but they had been melted down or concealed. There are also to be seen foundations of brick buildings all over the place; and here, doubtless, once stood the Christian city of Dair-el-Okul, the Dair Ocula of Assemanni, and the Dhukhala of the Arabs, by which name the latter to this day designate the bank below Reddad. At 11.15 we reached Dhukhala, and found there the Dour Arabs,* a small fellaheen tribe dependent on the Shammar. There is nothing to be seen but mounds of saline clay and *débris* of ancient ruins. This place is half way to Coot by land from Baghdad. An old Arab on the left bank offered us a sheep (or, as he termed it, a sacrifice). The Arab (and every Arab is his own butcher), when slaughtering, says, '*Bismillah er Rahman*,'—'In the name of the Most Merciful.' Consequently it is a meat-offering. He also told us as we passed that the Wadie and six of his horsemen made a raid† against the Shammar, and killed ten of them, and plundered a small encampment, as a retribution for their conduct the previous year.

At midday we reached Tel Sari on the right bank, above which on the desert the Arabs pointed out ruins called Gubbub-el-Nar; perhaps Gubbub

* The Dour Arabs are tributaries of the Shammar, and consist of about 100 tents, and could muster 200 muskets.

† This expression of the Arabs, غاروا عليهم, is well rendered by *equitare inultos* of Horace, describing their predecessors, the Parthians.

Humaid of the Arab geographers, which ruin was watered by a branch of the Nil Canal derived from the Euphrates at Babylon, of which country we will speak hereafter. Passing which we came to the Humanyeh ruins on the same bank : part of a wall and the base of a minaret are all that remain of the old city, which is mentioned by the Talmudic writers and which was also watered by a branch of the canal above mentioned. Large bricks, with the cuneiform inscription, have been found here, which attests its Babylonian origin. The river here makes a *détour* of several miles towards the north-west, and then south-east and north, and returns within a quarter of an hour's walk of the same place ; the ruined wall already alluded to runs along the neck of the land formed by it. The Kelabyeen Arabs were encamped close to it ; we got round at 4 p.m. ; from thence the bank on the right is called Oksaima, and that on the left Zelga and Shuddaif. The latter is a well-known place, and the Arabs say that the jungle is called the wood of Jurgerayah, the name of a once populous town which stood here below the confluence of the Tigris and the Nahriwan, which is now dry. Finding my way through the jungle, I walked across the plain to its banks, about a mile from the river. They are of great height and extent, and enclose what was once a vast canal, running almost due north ; from this place they traverse the plain on the east of the Tigris, seventy miles north of Baghdad, to this place. To

understand the features of the country which we have passed, covered, as it appears, with mounds, the *débris* of ruined cities, I must digress to notice that great watercourse which once irrigated the plains of Calah, Opis, Baghdad, Ctesiphon, Seleucia, and Beth-Germa, which owed their protection* and prosperity to the vast field brought under cultivation by its numerous branches.

The difficulty of traversing the country on account of the canals is mentioned by Xenophon; and although it has been so continually flooded by the Tigris, these great lines are uneffaced, whilst almost every other trace of the past is buried in the ever-shifting alluvium. Scientific men, by tracing the course of this canal with much erudition, patient investigation, and talent, have partly elucidated the subject of the comparative geography of the country through which it flows; the pleasure of proclaiming *Ευρηκα* has given rise to many absurd theories. Colonel Rawlinson has most satisfactorily identified the Arba of the historian of the Lower Empire, and Narha of the chronicles of Pascal and Simeon, with the Nahriwan of the Arab geographers; and could we ascertain its precise antiquity, we should then be able to fix with some degree of certainty the places where Opis, Sitace, and other cities of the plain, once stood.

* The Roman Emperor Heraclius, then at Dastgerd, a city to the east of the Dialeh and Tigris, was deterred from taking Ctesiphon by the size and rapidity of the Nahriwan and its branches, which interposed.

Derived from the Tigris to the south-south-east of the modern town of Dur, this royal caral had three feeders, which were called the Katuls. The other sources were below Sammarah; the former were cut in a deep and narrow bed, through the compact but coarse conglomerate which borders the valley of the Tigris at Dur, and flowed for ten miles in precipitous and confined gorges, when the banks decreased in elevation, and the canals proportionally expand from a breadth of fifteen to thirty yards. These various sources, or katuls, met (as we may infer from the Arab geographers) at a place called Sula, to the north of Baghdad, after passing which the united stream attained the breadth of one hundred yards and took the name of Nahriwan, for which word there are many derivations more speculative than interesting. It passed and received the redundant waters of the Adhem and Dialeh rivers, and irrigating with its thousand streams, it converted the present desert around Baghdad and Ctesiphon into a garden, and, as the above authorities state, flowed into the Tigris at this place.

Along the course of the Nahriwan, which extends from my position as far as the eye can reach, ruins of cities abound, but none vested with architectural interest. The following, although matters of personal observation, I shall describe in the words of Captain Jones in his remarks published by the Government of India, containing the most accurate information

regarding the principal sites, which are those of Kanater, Alberta, Joziyeh, and Sifweh :—

Ascending the Nahriwan from this point, the first ruin met with is that of Kanater, on the plain east of Baghdadiéh, which we passed yesterday, where the canal is embanked with well-constructed, kiln-dried bricks, for about 870 feet of its length. A dam and bridge were constructed of the same solid materials across the canal. Stone buttresses, at convenient and appropriate distances, support these embankments, and solid brick ramparts of ninety feet square protect them on either side; through which sluices, twenty feet wide, admitted and controlled the supply of water to the south. The breadth of the eastern walls is in some places as much as seventy-five feet; the opposite one, however, is but twelve feet in thickness, but where it adjoins the dam it attains twenty-two and twenty-nine feet; and the space occupied by the dam is 110 feet, including the sluices. These works, forming part of a vast system of irrigation, are now found on a desert over which desolation has reigned for ages. The uninhabited and solitary aspect of these remains of human industry and thoughtful enterprise, the very silence, arrest attention, and call for sympathy for their desolate state. One reflects and conjures up the once busy, teeming population of these vast plains, and the panorama of verdure, gardens, palaces, happy homes, and life in endless varieties, which, when these

works were in operation, the country presented, and one rides along them deploring the apathy of the present government, who are ignorant alike of the existence of these ruins and of the purpose for which they were constructed. Alberta is the next and only position on the Nahriwan which has retained its name. It was once a considerable city, directly on the high-road from Ekbatana to Ctesiphon, from which it is distant about seventeen miles. The attention of the traveller is arrested solely by quantities of bricks heaped together, and a high building called by the Arabs a minaret, but which I believe to be only a portion of a lofty wall. A short distance to the north of Alberta is Joziyeh, recognised as the site of a considerable town, and of a well-constructed bridge, mentioned by Arab historians, over the Nahriwan; it is two hours' journey below or south of the Dialeh. At the junction of the Nahriwan with the Dialeh stood the town of Nahriwan, now represented by the ruins of Sifweh, which we passed after leaving Gerarah, from the tomb of one Sifweh, which stands amidst the ruins, and who is described as having been Kadi of the town of the Nahriwan, which is consequently supposed to be identical with this place. Between it and Baghdad stood Zaffraniah, already alluded to, on a branch canal from the Nahriwan.

I have thus digressed to call attention to points of interest on the plain over which the eye of the

traveller wanders as he descends, particularly if he is lifted up and swept along by the April floods of the Tigris. Often have I watched the mirage elevating the banks of this noble canal, and presenting in dissolving views, as clearly as the spectator could wish, gardens, castles, groves, and water, shifting, like phantoms of the past, over the plains, recalling in 'fancy's wanderings' what once had been but now is not, 'but yet what again may shortly be.' Most of the branch canals are still traceable, intersecting in all directions the whole plain, from the valley of the Tigris to the Persian mountains.

From the source of the Nahriwan to Jurgerayah the average breadth of the plain—which it once irrigated—is about one hundred miles, and comprised the ancient fertile province of Chalonites. It is supposed that the Nahriwan flowed further south, even beyond Coot, which place we shall soon notice, for the Arab historian Yakuti states that in the neighbourhood of Jumbil, which is three hours' journey below Coot, a change in the course of the Tigris caused the Nahriwan to be choked up; and as it failed to reach the town of Jumbil, it was carried into the Tigris in the vicinity of Jurgerayah. We shall have to mention shortly this eastern course which the Tigris is thus described to have taken, dividing its waters; one portion flowed to the western district and basin of the Euphrates, while the other flowed towards the Persian mountains, and encroached

upon and obliterated every trace of the Nahriwan further south.

The Arabs attribute the cutting of this great canal to the Sassanians, and their writers relate an amusing anecdote regarding Chosroes Nashirvan, which reminds us of the fame of that monarch recorded in our own histories. They say that the monarch, when engaged in the chase, met a party of people crying, with dust on their heads, in great affliction, that the Melik-ez-Zeman Anusherwan had oppressed them by cutting this canal, which carried off the water from the Tigris which irrigated their crops. On hearing which he immediately dismounted and ordered a canal to be cut for them, probably from the Nahriwan Canal, to their lands; and that he sat on the ground each day overseeing the work, to atone for the misery which he had unknowingly inflicted, and did not leave the place until it was completed. Thus, they say, a worshipper of fire became an example to the followers of Islam. This tradition, the greatness of Chosroes, and his hall at Ctesiphon, may have led the Arabs of the country to attribute, as they generally do, the whole work to him.

This illustrates how the depth and navigation of the Tigris, over which we have so far come, must have been affected by this drain on its waters. We see the great width of the canal, and can calculate the great body of water which must have been abstracted from that river. Moreover, it inter-

cepted those which from the mountains of Persia flowed towards the Tigris; and the waters of the Adhem and the Dialeh, two of its considerable tributaries, were diverted and led into the Nahriwan. The works on the Adhem, to the north of Baghdad, consisting of dams, sluices, and embankments of solid stonework, are still extant, and so interesting as to entice the traveller to turn out of his way and cross a dangerous and solitary tract of country to visit them. Those in the Dialeh consist of a solid dam of brick masonry, thrown across the river at Sifweh, already noticed, by which its waters were also made to enter the Nahriwan, and add to the volume of that great artery. Consequently the river Tigris, if deprived of other resources, must have been between Dur and Jurgerayah reduced to a miserable stream; its navigation intercepted and the commerce on its waters diminished: but the case was far different. Baghdad, long before the decline of the canal, was the rival of Cairo in supplying the western world with the commodities of India; and in the work of Marino Sanuto there is an appeal to the sovereigns of Europe to induce their merchants to trade up the Tigris through the dominions of the Caliph of Baghdad. That city, there is no doubt, enjoyed more real magnificence than any other which rose from the trade of the ancient Arabians.* This allusion to the Tigris infers that it was then a fine navigable river,

* See Vincent's *Commerce of the Ancients*, b. iii. p. 359.

and must have been supplied from other sources to an extent more than equivalent to the body of water carried off by the Nahriwan ; and this, I believe, was effected by leading the waters of the Euphrates into the Tigris by a series of canals commemorated by history, and by cuneiform writings inscribed on bricks found in the abutment in the river at Baghdad, and in other places, recording it as the work of the Babylonian kings, who exerted all their energies in cultivating the vast plain of Mesopotamia to our right, and by the above means secured to the Tigris its navigation and trade, and rendered the country between these noble rivers a rich and populous empire. Groves of date-trees and cultivation of every description overshadowed the desert, even down to a very late period.* Of these canals four are noticed by all historians and geographers, both European and Arab,—the Nahr Esa, the Nahr-es-Sursur, the Nahr Malcha,† and the Nahr Cutha. The first is represented by the present Suglaweyah, which is navigable to the present day, and adventurous travellers from Baghdad proceed along it to the Euphrates, and up that river to Balis, when energetic Pashas hold the reins. It was navigated by an English steamer—the *Euphrates*—for the first time in 1838 ; which vessel,

* The date-groves of Xenophon. The Arab historians call it سواد الاراك, the dark or overshadowed land of Irak, in contradistinction to the whiteness of the desert.

† The Nahr-el-Malcha alone retains its ancient name ; it is said to have been cut by Nebuchadnezzar.

under the command of Captain H. B. Lynch, C.B., passed through it from the Tigris to the Euphrates—a feat of which England may well be proud. The Suglaweyah leaves the latter river above Felugah, and is the most northern of the canals. Skirting the upper part of the alluvium and abutting on the Median Wall, it forms with that barrier the northern boundary of the rich alluvial plain of Chaldea, into which, after winding in solitary and imposing grandeur through wide valleys and castellated cliffs, the Euphrates now enters. Above this the Euphrates is designated 'The Frath' by the Arabs, and by the Jews, in Biblical literature, 'The Great River;' for there, in a region peculiarly its own, it rolls its golden expanse in undiminished volume; but now its waters can be turned to use or desolation. The Nahr Esa passes the pile of Akkerkuf, an ancient Chaldean city, which we noticed on leaving Baghdad, and after flooding the country to the west of that city it enters the Tigris in its vicinity, as mentioned above.

The Nahr-es-Sursur, though noticed by all Arab geographers as one of the four canals, has lost its ancient name. It may have been the same as Nahr of Sura, an ancient city near Mosaib, on the Euphrates; its bed is traceable from there to the vicinity of Ctesiphon.

The Nahr Malcha, 'The Royal Canal,' Nebuchadnezzar's great work, stretches its vast embankments across the plain, which, from their elevation, were

interesting and imposing ; on the right, however as we descended the river from the Ctesiphon, the bed is quite dry, and has been so for ages. This canal is the most historic of all, and from bricks having been found containing cuneiform inscriptions, we may infer that both it and Nahr Esa were the work of a Babylonian king. The Nahr Malcha flowed into the Tigris below Ctesiphon, but the Roman Emperor Julian, by another cutting, diverted its waters into a canal which flowed into the Tigris above that city.

The Nahr Cutha is the present Nahr Nil; it flowed from above the present town of Hillah, passes the great mound of Abraham, supposed to be the ancient Kutha, and waters the country along the right banks of the Tigris in this vicinity ; it is said to have entered the river above the town of Wasit, through which the Tigris, as we shall hereafter notice, formerly flowed.

These canals conveyed the waters of the Euphrates into the Tigris, and its volume was sufficient to make that river navigable for Oriental commerce, and vessels trading up the Tigris proceeded by the Nahr Malcha to Babylon and the Upper Euphrates. These canals having had their sources north of Babylon, the body of water extracted from the Euphrates must have rendered that river very inconsiderable, which I conjecture was the cause why it was so easily diverted from its channel when Babylon was attacked by Cyrus.

Before leaving this interesting locality, where the network of man's agricultural industry which once led these classic waters into every part of the system ends, let us contemplate for a moment what must have been the beauty, richness, and fertility of this country during those ages. Lofty artificial plateaux, with their hanging gardens and palaces (the *débris* of which now alone remain), formed a delightful retreat from the snowy ridges of Ekbatana : the tops of its mountains are now just visible. These gave new vigour to its inhabitants after the intense heat of the summer, which is necessary to ripen the luscious date, pomegranate, and other fruits of this region, the natural produce of its plains, which are now reduced to the sterility of the desert.

At 8.30 a.m we reached a small deserted walled enclosure on the right bank, called Masalaheyah, where a few wandering Arabs sometimes come and cultivate ; the bank of the river is broken, and at very high floods the Tigris runs through it into the plain and a large jungly marsh. As we passed three lions swam across the stream. It was at this spot that Captain Selby, in 1841, encountered a party of about three hundred Arabs. He ventured with about ten English artillerymen to leave the East India Company's steamer *Semiramis*, which he commanded, and on foot to attack a warlike tribe, for the purpose of avenging an insult offered to a native under their protection. They met with a reverse. Captain Selby

was carried back insensible, having been severely wounded ; the artillerymen were also injured, but they fought gallantly ; and on this occasion, for the first time, the British sabre crossed with the Arab lance on these plains.

Monday, March 15th, as the sun rose above the blue Persian mountains, to which we seemed to have approached, we hoisted sail before a fresh breeze ; a white line of mounds, stretching along the horizon, rose on the right about two miles distant, and a brick ruin, called by the Arabs Nejmé, or 'The Star,' marks the site of some ancient city—perhaps, as its Arabic name imports, a Chaldean astronomical observatory. At 7.15 we came to Muzair, a small Arab Imaum, or tomb ; the boatmen sang verses as we passed, and seemed pleased at having reached this place, as its name rhymes with the word Zair, which implies promenade, with perfect safety.*

At 8 a.m., having made a very long, circuitous voyage, the river brought us back again to Masalaheyah ; thence we proceeded to the deserted jungles of Summers and Shurs. This, they say, is the nearest point of the river to Badrai and Jassan, the former Ba Daraiah, the Beth Darius of Assemani, a village near the Persian mountains ; it is about seven hours'

* *لو جيت بلمزير اخد اباتك وزاير* 'Apprehend nothing after passing Muzair ; but put on your cloak and go zair ; visit the shore.' When the Arab leaves his boat he goes generally naked, so that he cannot be plundered of his cloak.

D

march from this place. At 11 we reached Bug-hailah, a similar mud enclosure on the right bank ; and on the desert side are the uninhabited ruins of Naamineyeh, a city founded by one of the kings of Hirah (which, according to Abu-el-Feda, was burned down by El Zeug in the ninth century of our era), and a high mound called Absorah. This place is noticed by Rennell.* Here we met the first large encampment of Arabs, the Dhuaychath, a part of the Zobaid tribe, and passed a deserted castle or mud port, called Kulath Sheikh Jaad, an Imaum called Mehidi, and (on the opposite bank) the Abu Ham-maurah mound. Arabs lined the banks. Men, women, and naked children, amused themselves by calling out, and asking if there were any boats in the rear ; particularly if there were any wood boats,† the crews of which they deprive of their provisions, money, and sometimes of their clothes, particularly when, as at present, their Sheikhs are at war with the Government. At two o'clock we came to the jungle Algayah, and found a reach running north, which obliged us to lower sail. I therefore went on shore. The left bank is called Ruglah ; the right, El Beni. The wood and jungle were very thick close along the bank, and my Arab pilot warned me to look out for lions, which abound here. I worked my way through, shot a few frankolin, and reached the plain, the verdure of which,

* See vol. iii. pp. 353, 487.

† They carry no guard or matchlock-men.

covered as it was with grass and flowers, was very beautiful. I had a pleasant walk to the end of the reach : there were no Arabs, not even in the distance, and being four o'clock, the air was delightfully cool. At 6.30 we reached Coot, half way to Bussoreh, on the fourth day after leaving Baghdad, which was a very favourable passage.

Sheikh Seba, the chief, an old friend, was walking along the bank with his crooked staff, and having greeted me in the most patriarchal manner, gave directions to my Arabs as to the best place to secure the boats, calling upon his tribe (as his children) to assist. He came on board, kissed us all round, and hinted obscurely as to the wretched state of the country, that the Arabs were gathering and plundering close by, which drew forth a gentle rebuke from my head boatman, for his having suggested the possibility of our being plundered under his protection. He made the most precise inquiries respecting the troops, the Pasha, and other political news, looking mysterious and stroking his beard as he spoke. He is not molested by the Turkish Government, and receives from it sometimes a small yearly stipend : he is charged with all communications between Baghdad and Bussoreh passing through this place. Sheikh Seba, fearing the hostile intentions of the Arabs on the opposite bank, had his spacious black tent pitched inside the mud walls of an enclosure. It was night, and Seba invited me to dine.

On going there, I had nearly fallen into the pits which everywhere surround it, and which were originally dug to keep the corn in. Arabs with lighted torches showed the way, and ushered me along in silence to where the fire was burning in the centre of the tent. At the extreme end, on a single carpet, stood my host; and, ere I was seated, I had to encounter a heap of kisses, compliments, and salaams. The sufrah, or mat of date-leaf, was spread, and soon garnished with piles of rice and meat, to the great satisfaction of old Kathem, captain of my boat, and the picturesque groups of Arabs who formed the other three sides of an assembly of not less than fifty men, who all partook of the repast. Before leaving, I bought a beautiful greyhound from a Shammar Arab for six kerans. The old Sheikh saw me safely back to my boat, and when seated in my cabin he congratulated me in having made it so comfortable. I ordered pipes and coffee. The old fellow's eyes glistened after something, and looking knowingly at Hassan Ali, my servant, he said, 'The Sahib is not without something good,' which my little valet understood at once, and asked permission in English to bring in some brandy, which, after the Sheikh's rich pilau, was the very thing. Seba helped himself pretty freely, and enjoyed it thoroughly, observing that the Prophet knew not of such liquor, nor did he mean to interdict anything but the wretched stuff the Nasaras* called wine.

* Name of the Christians of Baghdad.

The old fellow and myself soon became boon companions, and agreed in everything until his people, who were waiting for him on shore, became uneasy at his long stay, when he departed with assurances of his deepest friendship and blessings. We were old friends, as he had taken me down the Nahriwan on a former occasion, when we travelled from Baghdad, along the marshes of the Dialeh river, over a grassy broken country to the Nahriwan, and then (last spring) journeyed along its banks, sometimes chasing the gazelles over the open plain or wandering in the bed of the great canal above described. On that occasion we met some Arabs who appeared most friendly, and we passed two nights in their tents. We then examined the embankments, *débris* of irrigation works, and the ruins above mentioned. On another occasion I had to travel over the same plains from this place, but without my Sheikh, accompanied only by a muleteer, as my faithful little valet, Sebah, was away, having gone on a Turkish errand, and I could not wait for his return; the consequence was, we were attacked by fifteen men on the morning after our leaving Coot. How we beat them off and fought our way would be too long a digression here. We were, however, successful, and well pleased when the well-known Arch of Ctesiphon and the river Dialeh were reached. I here notice that land journey from Baghdad to Coot as descriptive of the state of the country on that bank of the Tigris. From

this place to where it falls into the Euphrates,* at Ghurnah, the Tigris is called the Shat-el-Amarah. Above this place it is called the Didjleh. The name of Tigris† is not known to the Arabs.

Many peculiarities attach to the Tigris above this place which are absent in the Shat-el-Amarah. The banks are higher, and the rise and fall of the river much greater; the plains on either side are consequently not cultivated to the same extent as those of the Amarah, and its navigation is much more difficult: sand-banks abound in it. Should a boat get aground in the mid stream, owing to its great breadth, a rope cannot be sent ashore with any effect; and the shoals are also so shifting, that a bank is immediately formed round the stranded boat, which may have to remain until a further rise of the river. In the low season there are not more than three feet of water over many of these shoals. The Tigris is called Amarah, or the river of the Ameers, the chiefs of a once powerful tribe of the Rebeyah, famed in Arab story, having ruled for centuries over this territory. They were the descendants of the Beni Wail Arabs of the Rubeyah family, and are said to have been placed in this district by the Sassaman kings, as a barrier against the Bedouin incursions. They are to

* The Arab geographer, Abu-el-Feda, calls it the Didjleh right down to the Persian Gulf. See page 155.

† The word Tigris, from the Hebrew Hiddekel, is thus reducible: Hiddekel-el-Deker, easily converted into the El Tigre by the European nations. The *l* is often changed into *r*.

this day represented by a plundering tribe, presided over by a chief styling himself an Ameer, whose tenting-ground extends from the Persian frontier to the Euphrates. He has now but little real power and a few followers; but the respect paid him as a lineal descendant of those whose hands and feet were once kissed by Arabia's powerful chiefs is very great.

Coot, distinguished as the 'Coot-el-Amarah,' which M. Tavernier described centuries ago, is opposite to the entrance of a branch which the Tigris sends off here, and returns thereby its waters to the Euphrates: this arm is navigable by boats, which, during the high water, come up through it from Bussoreh by the Euphrates. It is called the Hie; the Bedouins call it the Musurrudah, or 'the well-fortified cut.' It joins the Euphrates above Suk-i-Shukh. To have proceeded by the Hie and the Euphrates was at this season, during the high flood, only practicable with boats half the tonnage of our own. The route would have been shorter, and, from the abundance of fine wood on its banks, much more picturesque; and were the country safe, one might with pleasure from it visit the ruins of Wasil, and of the very interesting Chaldean cities of Sinkerah and Wurka, which are on the right bank of the Hie, near the Euphrates.

From the periodical advance of the alluvium into the Persian Gulf, which has been made the object of scientific inquiry, its actual rate determined, and from the result of late discoveries and inscriptions

found in the country, as also from the notices of sacred and ancient histories, it is pretty clearly ascertained that the sea was once in the vicinity of these ancient cities, and that they were the great maritime emporiums of the Chaldees, full of shipping, and hence their commerce and importance. The Tigris then flowed into the Euphrates' marshes, and instead of making the present great *détour* to the east, it ran in straight reaches to the sea, by Sinkerah; even in early Mahomedan times it did so, and passed through Wasit, not far off on the right bank of the Hie, to Bussoreh, and the Ameers may have diverted the present river to the eastward, from whence the name Shat-el-Amarah may be derived.

On Tuesday, the 16th March, at 6.15 a.m., we left Coot, after having taken in provisions, and entered the tortuous windings of this part of the Tigris called the Achus, or 'Elbows.' The wind was from the east, consequently we could hoist no sail. The day was beautifully clear, and the blue Persian mountains rose high on our left, relieving with their purple and rich tints the yellow sunburnt plain at their feet, while the waving groves of young tamarisk-trees bordering the river gave a pleasing softness to the scene: flocks of pelicans fished along its banks.

Early in the afternoon we reached the Saadah, a tribe respected for their quiet and trading habits; they enjoy an immunity from impositions and plunder, being the descendants of the Prophet, as the word

Sayed (plural, Saadah) imports. They form the medium of communication between the more hostile tribes and the Arab merchants of Baghdad; they are, consequently, unmolested, and, moreover, are trusted by them with their capital and trade; and when the country is very much disturbed, a holy Sayed is generally despatched on an errand or engaged as an escort. At sunset the Nokoda announced that we were leaving the Achus, or Elbows, of which there are twelve, and that now the river, a few feet only below the level of the plain, resumed its usual course; flowing in long and sweeping reaches to the south, its course was marked by the smoke from the tents of the Saadah. It was perfectly calm, and the evening was serenely beautiful. The silvery pelican slept on the smooth surface of the waters, or vied with our progress as our lofty sail scarce swelled to the current of air. The west presented one continuous sheet of burnished gold, in contrast with the melting depth and rich blue of the sky above, and the mountains of Luristan in purple shadows bounded the eastern horizon. It was the hour of prayer, and the sun had just dipped behind the western plain. Our Arabs on the poop stood erect in front of their abbas, or cloaks, spread before them, looking in a supplicating attitude in the direction of Mecca; with their hands raised to their breasts (open towards heaven), praying, or falling on their knees, they pressed their foreheads against the plank. The name of Allah,

uttered in sighs, broke the dead silence which the evening hour naturally imposed. 'Ullah-ho-Akbar' is the universal call; and solemn and forcible is the appeal when nature hallows it with a glory like the present. The church bells of our native land, to the congenial mind, create solemn thoughts, associated with the recollection of boyhood and days now gone by; but the evening call to prayer heard along the bright and glowing waste of the desert is more strikingly solemn, and so impressive that it breathes the very spirit of devotion. After prayers my Arabs commenced to pull at their sweeps: the other boat getting out theirs, came alongside, and vied with us in speed; their shouting as they pulled together, and their wild boat-songs, amused us until the darkness descended. At 8.30 we reached another encampment of the Saadah, and steering for the bank made fast for the night against the dark shore.

At sunrise I descended on *terra firma*. It was the merry 17th March, St. Patrick's Day. Flocks of sheep and shepherd-boys covered the plain; and Arabs, with coarse abbas, or cloaks, for sale, made towards the boats. A sprig of shamrock I was fortunate enough to find, which reminded me of more congenial shores far away, very different from the wild and marsh-begirt plains divided by the Tigris. On my return to the boat, Sheikh Idaam, the chief of the encampment, was there to visit me, and took his seat by my side. He assured me of the peaceful state of the

Arabs, offered any assistance, and gave encouraging reports of their produce, which induced Kauthem to leave money and some large jars made of hide with him, for the purchase of wool and clarified butter against his return. After having made him a handsome present of a robe, a pair of boots, and some tobacco, I gave the order to cast off. We were on our way at 7 a.m. The wind being southerly, no sail was set. At 9 a.m., however, the wind freshening, we came-to for half an hour, to take in a supply of firewood, as the Nokoda represented there was a great scarcity of that article—in fact, none—between this and Bussoreh. The banks were now very low and marshy; the cackling of wild geese and the clamour of flocks of cullum and flamingoes rose everywhere from the plain. The wind veering to the north, we reached the mud fort of Kulath Skeikh Saad at 3.15 p.m., and a sacred grove, called Mugeysal,* at 5.30.

The low-spreading black tents of Sheikh Abbas of the Benilam Arabs flanked the grove; they were ranged in squares, and, for Arabs, were really magnificent. Some twenty well arranged were pointed out as occupied by his wives, and hundreds of fine-looking Arabs stood on the dark margin of the waters, under the shadow of the grove; their long picturesque dresses, striped with white, yellow, and red, relieving the shadows which the large willows reflected on the

* Mugeysal means the place of washing the body of some holy man who had died here.

deep eddies of the water. The grove is held sacred, and has its Imaum and shrine. It is considered profanity to cut a stick there (compare the account of the Corcyrean sedition in Thucydides, *φάσκων τέμνειν χάρακας*); consequently it has become a clump of fine old trees, of which many a tradition and fabled legend are related to inspire the passing navigator with awe. The Arabs required to know the Baghdad news, they waved their long sleeves, and shouted to us in their fine guttural accents terms of welcome, pointing out the proper place for landing.

We are now in the territory of the Benilam, a wild and powerful tribe, who possess the whole country, from the tents of the Saadah to the Hud, which inlet we shall shortly notice, and from the Euphrates to the Persian mountains. Their allegiance to the Turkish Government is nominal. Abbas is the lordly Skeikh of the right bank, and his brother, Mudkoor, that of the left. The tribe of the latter range from the river to the mountains, and there join the powerful tribe of Hassan Khan-i-Feighhly, half Arab and half Persian; and a Persian fair one is at this moment in the harem of Abbas. Our Nokoda told a story regarding the ruins at Fil-a-Fil and Serud, which we shall pass to-morrow, respecting the bridge connecting this part of the river with those in Persian territory, between an Arab and a lady of that country: the latter, he said, built a bridge there for her Arab lover, who, to her surprise, immediately disappeared.

The Benilam were originally Bedouin, and descendants of the Beni Wail. They were most likely a collection of many tribes, as the name بني, children, and لام collection, implies. The tribe is divided into two families, the Beni-es-San, and Abd Ali Khan; the former is the chief one. Many old tribes are to be found among them, particularly the Caab, the Sera, the Ans, the Koraish, and the Khusrej; the two latter assign an importance to this tribe they would not otherwise possess. They have very fine horses, and are celebrated as powerful allies.

Kathem, stroking his fine white beard, now approached me with such stores in the hands of an Arab who accompanied him as he thought would be acceptable to the Sheikh, which being duly approved he gathered his robes together and passed over the side down into a bellum, which made at once towards shore. He was soon again seen landing among a crowd of Arabs, waving his hand, signifying that we might bring our craft alongside. He had met the Shiekh's Commissary-General; salaams had been exchanged and hands shaken, and while he proceeded to the Sheikh's salamluk, the Sheikh's wageer never ceased to urge our coming alongside.

On Kathem's return I was informed that the Sheikh was coming on board, which I thought it better to anticipate, and passed out through a line of Arabs to meet him. I was struck with their fine features. They were tall, stoically friendly, without

displaying any curiosity or vulgar pressing. The Sheikh, followed by Arabs carrying long spears and armed with swords, had just left the tent as I approached, which, after exchanging salaams, we entered. He assured me of his friendship, that the English were a great people, and the Lynch tribe well known; they were always sending presents, and our steamers something wonderful, and were to be trusted even with gold. His Bedouin Arabic was so tense that Kathem had once or twice to explain. He compared the blighting effect of the Turkish Government to a winter fire *أشد من نار الشتي*, more devouring than a winter's fire; which expression puzzled me until I reflected that the cold air of winter consumed their wood very rapidly. We parted very good friends, and accompanied to the shore by several chiefs with tufted spears, I resumed my place on the lofty prow of my native craft.

The state of existence which the Arabs lead on these plains is one of comparative ease, and presents a perfect specimen of patriarchal life. Children of Ishmael and of the desert, they have wonderfully preserved their character; and have not even attempted to alter their social condition. This tenacity of old customs their Prophet foresaw, and by inculcating the old worship of the God of Ishmael eradicated their superstitions and the worship of idols, which had crept in during their intercourse with the Persians on the one side and the Romans on the other; and enabled

his followers to obliterate the vestiges of Christianity which existed in his time at Hirah Anbar (purely Arab cities) and along the eastern limits of Arabia, but which could scarcely be distinguished owing to the worship of relics, crosses, and other superstitions, from the idolatry they were called on to renounce, and which, had it taken deep root in apostolic purity, would have altogether changed the political character of the country. Some remnants of Christian Arabs are still to be found among the Subba, or Christians of St. John, an industrious race of artizans, existing at the present day on the banks of the Euphrates, of whom I shall speak hereafter. Christianity is not, neither can its pure and unselfish doctrine ever be, congenial to the descendants of Ishmael, who are as averse to all improvement or innovation as they are proud of their laws, their Unitarianism, and their long genealogies. The present people no longer possess the enthusiasm of the first followers of Islamism, nor their spirit or religious enterprise, though the latter is enjoined by their creed. Accustomed to live in the desert, in the midst of waste and ruin, they learn rather to conceal their property and pretensions from the exaction or suspicion of the great and powerful; they look to their Sheikh for all political wisdom, and fight for him when called upon. They have little thought or care for the future; their flocks graze on the plain, which produces rice and corn with the slightest amount of labour; their wants are few; and they generally trust

their health, their hopes, and fears, to the silent current of time and fate. This mode of life gives them all a stoical appearance. They delight, however, in ejaculations on the mutability of all things earthly, and dwell with pleasure in repeated expressions on the unity and greatness of God. With His name on their lips they rush to deeds of blood, rapine, and other acts of savage, uncultivated natures, to do any of which '*Bismillah*' or '*Ensh a Ullah*,' would, with them be equally appropriate.

They boast of their descent, and when in action call on each other as sons of some famous ancestor, as 'O Sons of Wyeal !' They are great grammarians and fond of their language, which they term more piercing than the arrow, more pleasing than the breezes of spring, and as clear as the wells of Paradise ; they boast of their hospitality, of their preserving unstained their right to protect the guest they entertain, of the chastity of their wives, the support of their friends, and the terror of their foes. These are the favourite themes of the Arab song ; and though they know not what it is to toil—for those who engage in trade and works of industry are despised by the Arabs, even those who till the ground—yet they will spring to action at a moment's notice, and can endure great hardships and fatigue : they sleep all day in the tents, and towards evening form into groups around the fire. The largest assembly is in the chief's tent, where they discuss political events, or observe an unbroken silence,

passing salutations to each other at long intervals : when they recognise a friend both parties stand up, and, remaining where they are, pass their salutations, which sometimes occurs after the stranger has been seated for nearly half an hour. Amusing stories are often told by the Moolah, or Poet Laureate of the tribe, in which frequent allusions are made to historic events. An endless quarrel, for instance, gives rise to the proverb of the blood of Colayb. A deadly feud, and the recitation of the history of some war or Ghuzoo plundering party, '*equitare inultos*,' the Arab loves to repeat and listen to. Their wives attend on them in the harem, cook and pile up the dishes of rice, and keep the money, corn, &c. The dress of the females is a simple blue frock ; but they are fond of strings of coins round the neck, and massive ornaments of gold and silver on the arms and ankles.

The still and golden stream bore us silently and rapidly beyond speaking distance, through a plain covered with 'the tents of the tribe. At 6 p.m. we reached the little white Imaum of Aly Gerby, and another similar grove of trees, which were old and druidical, for sanctity has hitherto saved them from destruction. Here, under an atmosphere of superstition or religious feeling, the Arab is harmless ; the shade of the lofty trees, the darkness, the little temple in the centre, inspire him with kindly feelings : his children sing and swing on the branches, the doves coo above,

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while he prays and worships Allah. In every religion the same feeling has always prevailed, and the grove has been held sacred from time immemorial, even in iconoclastic England, as testified by one of her sweetest hymns—

‘ Its calm retreat, its silent shade,
With prayer and praise agree ;
And were by Thy sweet bounty made,
For those who worship Thee.’

At 8.45 we came to the supposed ruin of the old Alexandrian bridge of Fil-a-Fil, consisting of a piece of an arch in the stream, and three bastions with cutwaters. The bricks were large and kiln-dried, burnt with points to them ; a buttress wall projects nearly on a line—this may be a secondary building, or part of the ruins of Serud : the former is all on the right bank, and the latter consists of a series of mounds running south-east in the direction of Ahwaz. At 9 p.m. we came to for the night ; here there are the remains of a khan built of good burnt brick. In this place during the hot months a large brown fly is very annoying, and almost intolerable, as it will sting through your very boots.

I slept on the poop, and found when I awoke, owing to the marshes all round, that the dew fell heavy during the night. At 6 a.m. the morning broke over the Persian mountains, and as the wind blew from the north I was glad to hear the wild

and characteristic chorus of our Arabs, who were hoisting the sail. The banks were scarcely a foot above the water, and flocks of cullum birds stood majestically on the greensward. I shot one with a ball, and an Arab immediately plunged after it ; we swept rapidly along, and owing to an eddy, he with difficulty made the shore before we lost sight of him. However, he reached it, and the *Hadedeyah* in the rear picked up both him and the bird. Another grove rose high over the distant plain. At 11 a.m. we were opposite it. It is called Ali Sherki, and is on the left bank.

Our Nokoda shouted as we passed for Sheikh Dhuhaylis, the chief of a small tribe who always encamp near the grove, called Dhuhaybath. A pretty girl of this tribe was married to a nephew of Sheikh Seba, of Coot, who was on board with us. She had run away with him and they were married at Gurnah. He satisfied Mahomedan law, and paid the usual sum for her to her people, but on his return with her Sheikh Dhuhaylis seized the amorous pair as they passed this place, and imprisoned Sheikh Seba's nephew, whom he put in irons. However, as it came to the knowledge of Sheikh Seba, he was released, but deprived of the object of his affections. Our Nokoda wished to get Sheikh Dhuhaylis on board, and make him restore the money or the wife. The poor bereaved one sat looking at each group of Arab girls, swearing that, trusting to my protection, he

would seize and carry her off on board, should she happen to be among those lining the bank ; but no such good fortune awaited him, and he only became the object of many a laugh, as his story excited no small interest and sympathy among the crew.

Passing Ali Sherki, we reached a mound and steep bank on the left, where Ghendil, the father of Mudkooor, lies buried. A small dome is built over him ; a little Arab encampment lay on the green plain skirting the river, and Arab girls, in their loose blue frocks, ran along the banks, while some sat in groups over the eddies, singing with very pleasing and clear voices, ridiculing as I was told the boat, sail, and Nokoda, whose grim-bearded visage broke into a smile, as admiringly he remarked, 'Such are the Binath-el-Arab'—the daughters of Arabia.

At 1.30 p.m. we passed two small craft buying ghee and selling dates, and a long train of camels sent down by Mudkooor were being laden from them. They sold cottons also to the Arabs, and received clarified butter and wool in exchange. We had scarcely passed them when a light bitumen canoe, with several men armed with swords and guns, dropped alongside. In the presence of trade I at first thought there was little to apprehend, but soon found it was otherwise. The musketeers caught up their guns, and fierce abuse commenced ; they were ordered not to attempt to board us. Insolence and threats on both sides ensued as they grappled our

boat ; and seeing my Nokoda giving way, I jumped on the poop, showed fight, and with the butt of my gun shoved a fellow off ; our matchlock-men soon came to the rescue, and as we were making rapid way, the wind being favourable, I felt we should have the best of it. The chief was Abu Shelfa, Sheikh of the Seraj (of the Benilam). He held his sword in his hand, and standing up in the stern of his boat he looked a determined cut-throat. We soon mustered twenty guns, and stood in defiance, and the *Hadedeyah* coming on close in his rear, insolence gave way to supplication. As he was going off we threw him a chintz dress, some pipes and tobacco, the Nokoda suggesting that it would be better to do this and compromise matters, as part of his tribe were still before us. These predatory Arabs do not molest those who come among them for purposes of commerce, with presents for their Sheikh, as in the case of the above-mentioned craft, though they may not, perhaps, be armed with a single weapon. The first object of the trader, ere getting into their territory, is to conciliate the Sheikh only, who, for a small present of coffee, dates, and tobacco, takes them at once under his protection, which, the wind being favourable, we did not deign to demand. We passed Nahr-es-Said on the right at 3 p.m., and Jubbeylan grove at 5 p.m. The Shat-el-Amarah brings us opposite a pretty grove every day towards sunset, and this one rose from its mirror of gold fully as beautiful as that of the previous

evening. The marshy plain was now for the first time covered with sheds made of mats, and only a few black tents of the Arabs, who are the last of the tributaries to the great Benilam tribes.

We passed Jubbeylah, and were sailing down the reach, when a fine old Arab rode down to the bank, followed by some twenty musketeers on foot ; this, we were informed, was Sheikh Mahomed ibn Subeyah, a brave fellow and a proverbial *sheltogh* (one who lives by exactions) among the Arab boatmen. He turned out to be, however, particularly civil, and all his exactions extended to a little tobacco, when the Nokoda, presenting my compliments in the highest titles he could conceive, received an invitation for me to go on shore, that he might have the honour of killing a sheep in sacrifice to do us honour. We sent the canoe with the required tobacco, a cotton dress, &c. The old fellow at its approach ordered away his people, received the envoy with the greatest urbanity, and departed quite pleased, ejaculating many pious expressions that God would be gracious to us. We were in our turn equally gratified to see the last of our Benilam friends and those small predatory tribes, who, encamped at some distance from their head Sheikh, are under little or no restraint ; they are not easily amenable to justice for minor offences on account of the difficulty of getting at them, and the poor chances of success which would attend an appeal to the distant Sheikhs of the Montifik or Benilam.

As night fell we saw the lofty masts of several huge craft lying opposite another grove called the Dufas. We heard distinctly the beating of drums, the Arab war-song, and the firing of musketry, reverberating over the low, marshy, deserted plain, and we soon entered the long dark reach in which they lay. It was a *carr*, or fleet of boats, laden with merchandise for Baghdad, each from seventy to one hundred tons burden, their captains* (a word familiar to the Arabs) and Nokodas were seated, like so many chiefs, on the bank round watch-fires, which lit up their fine, well-marked visages, black beards, and flowing dresses, and with the reflections in the dark water below formed a picture not easily to be forgotten. No danger being apprehended, they smoked their pipes and sipped their coffee, while their boats—twenty-two in number—laden with the productions of India and other climes, lay moored to the bank; their crews—about 700 in number—moved in a ring, and danced before them, shouting the Arab war-song, firing off their muskets muzzle downwards, and performing all manner of mad evolutions for their diversion. Our guards and trackers took up the song, waved blazing torches, pulled at the sweeps, and danced on the cargo from bale to bale, and stem to stern. To this *feu de joie* succeeded, from

* Implies the merchant or supercargo, whereas the term Nokoda applies to the person charged with the navigation of the ship or boat.

every quarter of our boats, such salutations as only an Oriental tongue and throat can utter, as each recognised on the bank a familiar voice or face which the bright blaze revealed among the picturesque groups on shore. We presented the appearance of a mass of moving, animated light, where all around was silent and intensely dark ; even the sheet of water between us added to the depth and interesting character of the scene. Our Nokodas now cursed their vociferous crews and enjoined silence, while they asked for information as to the state of the river. 'Onward, in God's name!' was the word, urging us to proceed, and, if possible, to pass the encampments of the El-bu-Mahomed that night, for even they had been detained by Mushettet, their Sheikh, ten days, and had to pay a heavy tribute for their release. Our Nokoda, however, wishing for further particulars, we lowered sail and sent a bellum for one of the captains, a friend of his ; and hearing his '*Ya Ullah*' as he ascended the side, we all pressed forward to receive him, which our helmsman did in true Arab style, with a kiss, an Oriental embrace, and long repetitions of salutations ; all of which duly ended, he detailed in glowing terms Mushettet's conduct, swearing in the most emphatic manner that he was a perfect marauder, and would have what he demanded. He obliged them on the way up to make fast to the bank and wait his pleasure ; after ten days' haggling and detention, and a fine of three hundred eyne piastres each, he released them.

I was astonished to hear, however, that in the meantime he treated them very hospitably : they all dined at the mudeif, in his tent, the only one now possessed by the tribe, a last remnant of their desert mode of life, for the rest of his people live in sheds and reed-houses. Mushettet is greatly feared by them as a brave and daring fellow : a full-grown lion, said our guest, crouches at his feet, rubs himself against the visitors, and when hungry gorges himself with the first sheep he meets, while the shepherd keeps out of the way till the brute returns to his master's tent, who, the Arab captain remarked, was not so easily satisfied. Our old friend concluded his story by saying, he 'neither fasts, nor prays, nor fears God or man, so we paid him money to protect the property of the faithful. If you proceed in the darkness of this night, and the wind remaining favourable, you may pass him unobserved, and escape his exactions and detentions, which are otherwise inevitable.'

My Nokodas were particularly disgusted at this report, they would rather have joined the pleasant party on shore, dwelling with some emphasis on the darkness of the night, the swollen state of the river, its broken banks, rapid roaring inlets, and the consequent serious danger of being unable to see our way, and of being swept into them, when, should we escape being swamped, we should get aground in the marshes and become a prey to the very Arabs we

were travelling by night to avoid ; for it might well be said of the river here,—

‘It mare proruptum et pelago premit arva sonanti.’

It was, however, deemed advisable to proceed. We were now opposite the Dufas grove and approaching the great Hud inlet on the left bank, which engrosses half the waters of the Shat-el-Amarah ; the territory of the Benilam tribe extends up to it. This inlet forms the marshes of the El-bu-Mahomed, which extend along the eastern bank of the Tigris to the end of its course, consisting of a series of lakes surrounded by reeds so high and dense that the large sheets of water which they encircle are almost concealed ; in the centre are low, flat, green islands, known only to the Arab, the buffalo, and wild boar, which latter abound in these vast morasses ; between which and the river are low, flat, verdant strips of land, in some places of considerable width, where they cultivate rice, wheat, barley, and pasture immense herds of buffaloes and some sheep.

The El-bu-Mahomed are Maadan, a term used among the Arabs to designate those who live by the rearing and feeding of buffaloes, which calling is looked upon as low and derogatory, and the tribes who profess it have lost caste amongst them. It is supposed they are the descendants of the old tribe of Maad, who, with that of Kinda, once ruled over the vast plateau of Nejd ; but owing to the manner of life they now lead, the name of Maad or Maadee no

longer retains its high pretensions, if they are really descended from that tribe, but has become the term to designate all that is low and common amongst them.

The wind having now fallen, we were, to a great extent, at the mercy of the current, which was rapid and swollen ; and as the sweeps were generally of little use, we had great difficulty in avoiding, during the night, being swept into the Hud on our left. We managed, however, by their aid, and the timely vigilance of our Nokoda, to keep a good distance from its entrance ; the steersman on the poop, pressing with his whole weight against the rudder beam, contrived to keep our boat away, urging on the crew at the sweeps, and offering up many a prayer to the saint of the sylvan shrine which we had passed : once past the mouth of the Hud, the noise of whose waters we distinctly heard, all was peace and quietness again. At the mouth of the Hud we have since purchased a *dépôt* for our steamers, around which a considerable town has risen, called Amara.

The blue outline of the mountains of Luristan began to appear against the first blush of dawn, as I rushed on deck roused from sleep by the shouting and cries of both Nokoda and men ; we were opposite an inlet, this time on the right bank, into which the current seemed rapidly bearing us, and, notwithstanding every exertion on the part of the men, we were swept into it. The craft grounded, and lurched to one side as if she would

heel right over ; but, luckily, the force of the current bore her into deeper water. The *Hadedeyah* struck the bank at the further entrance of the inlet, wheeled right round, and to our great satisfaction was kept by an eddy in the main stream, with the loss of her rudder and minus one of her crew, who fell overboard. Both crews having been collected, we discharged cargo as rapidly as possible over planks, with the aid of anchors and blocks, and after great difficulty the craft was tracked into the main stream ; fifty men were required to stem the force of the current. Fearing another mishap, when perhaps we might not be so fortunate, we made fast to repair, and held a council of war as to proceeding by daylight. In the confusion Toby, a Kurdistan bear, got on shore ; he was with some difficulty brought back, and was eventually deposited in the Zoological Gardens.

Friday, the 19th of March, was spent in repairing the *Hadedeyah's* rudder ; a southerly wind also blew, which would have prevented our leaving had all been right. The bank against which we lay was as green and soft as any English turf ; the river level being only a foot below the surface of the soil, a vast expanse of water flooded the interior. It was a March day of wind, cloud, and sunshine, and as the dark shadows flitted across the broad river, or the distant ripple of the marsh sparkled on the horizon, I reclined on the shore, with Toby beside me, enjoying the freshness, vastness, and peculiar features of the

scene; our group of Arabs basked in the sun on the low greensward, over which the brown hulks of our unwieldy craft towered. Towards evening an aquatic, in the shape of a naked Arab—a Maadee—made his appearance near the opposite shore in a black mashoof (canoe), the long line of which separated him only by a few inches from the surface of the water: spying us, he rapidly paddled away and disappeared.

We cast off at one o'clock; it blew half a gale from the north, and our Nokoda remarked it was the most favourable moment to pass the wild haunts of the El-bu-Mahomed; that with wind and stream in our favour they would scarcely attempt to molest us, and that it was best to pass Mushettet as quickly as possible. Making the stern fast to the bank, up went the sail, which took half-an-hour to bend; this done, we rapidly loosed off and swept along: the river running almost on a level with the plain, our crafts presented most picturesque objects as rounding each narrow reach they flew before the wind, We had not gone far when we disturbed a large wolf, the first I had ever seen on this river. In forty-five minutes we were opposite a line of mounds called Jower, and a few Arab *serriefts*, or sheds, proclaimed the presence of the El-bu-Mahomed. Men, women, and children came down to the bank within speaking distance, and as in jest asked us to take them with us: the boys and little girls were naked; the elders

had a coarse woollen drugget hung from one shoulder and tucked under a leathern string, which they wear round the waist; the women were simply clad in a long spacious frock of blue cotton, which, in many cases, displayed a form equal to the Venus of Milo in the Louvre; their colour was much fairer than one would expect.

At 2 p.m. we reached the Om-el-Jummah, a large and well-known inlet on the right; high mounds rise on the bank just below it, off which, the water shoaling, the *Hadedeyah* grounded; we passed her, and came to the grove of Abu Sidra, a little shrine of reed: a few naked urchins were sitting under the boughs of the trees, but ran off as we approached.

We were now two miles ahead of the *Hadedeyah*, and lest she should require assistance we lowered sail. One of our Arabs snatching up a club, and divesting himself of his clothes to escape plunder or detention, made across the country to communicate with the *Hadedeyah*. He had scarcely gone, when two women and a boy in a canoe, and several Arabs on shore, with matchlocks, were perceived making their way towards us. A long altercation was also remarked between a man and some women on the opposite side of the river, in which the latter prevailed; to our amusement, they turned him out of the mashoof into which he had forced himself, and having left him on the bank made towards us. They had butter, milk, and fowls to sell, and consequently would not

take the man on board, to induce us to allow them to approach. The fellow, however, came just opposite us and fired, which was answered immediately by a volley from our side. This brought the others, who had been approaching under cover of a bank, to a stand, and Hameed, the leader of our guard, one of the wildest men I have ever seen, dared them, with no small quantity of abuse, to advance, and marshalled us all on the poop.

The women naïvely encouraged our prowess ; but having first ascertained from them Mushettet's position, they were told to leave, as there was no time for buying and selling. They despatched a little boy they had in the mashoof to the Arabs, with whom a conference, favourable to ourselves, was held, and for a quarter of an hour they alternately collected and dispersed ; finding perhaps that their party was too small, they slowly retired, leaving disagreeable impressions as to their more seriously attacking us in greater numbers if the *Hadedeyah* did not speedily come up. She reached us, however, at 5 p.m., and we again made sail, hoping to pass Mushettet's haunts unobserved ; we were only a few hours off from them now. The night was dark and calm ; the wind from the north fell, and was scarcely sufficient to fill our sail. At about midnight we were at no great distance from the short and tortuous reaches called the Seeyed (Trap), which gives Mushettet, who was encamped below them, certain command over the

boats ; for all, except with a northerly wind, must strike sail. Here the fires on the banks lower down were very numerous ; the whole country south seemed swarming with reed-huts and watch-fires, and many a column of flame and light, as of a distant city, rose from the encampments and marshes.

At 2 a.m. we came-to, and held a council of war to decide how we should act, as the tribe was purposely encamped on this awkward zigzag ; the wind had fallen, and its elbows turning in all directions would oblige us to touch in every case the banks of some, and that in the very centre of the tribe.

My Arabs came to the conclusion that Mushettet himself was better than his followers, as he perhaps would be satisfied with a certain remuneration, while they, if we had no safe escort from him, would dog our steps, as the Nokodas expressed it, and carry off everything ; and under the circumstances, did we resort to force, success was almost hopeless, and our best efforts would be attended with loss of life ; and if outnumbered and plundered, the worst consequences would ensue. We, therefore, decided to remain at anchor, and call on Mushettet in the early morning. I retired to my cabin and fell asleep on my nice carpet—thinking little of Mushettet and his Arabs—until the fresh dewy morn broke over the mountains of Luristan. When rising, I took Kathem, my old well-known captain, two or three other Arabs, and with my double-barrelled gun on my shoulder, went

to face the chief in his den. He was encamped by himself, about a mile from the rest of his tribe, on a green plain, almost surrounded on all sides by water. At the extreme end of this plain were some reed-huts, for the occupation of his immediate retainers. As we landed I held a large letter in my hand, and declared our intention of going straight to the Sheikh ; several Arabs fell back, and scarcely the dogs molested us. Approaching the tent, I sent an Arab to report my arrival, and say I was an English Beg on my way to Bussoreh, and came to see his Excellency. We perceived no one in the tent, but the huge lion was lying there ; for which, as above stated, we were prepared. He got up, and looking at us excited some small alarm among my party. Mushettet, however, was there ; a fine tall man, with black beard and long black hair in ringlets down his back : he stood with a mace in his hand ; behind him entered two or three Arabs. Attracted by my half-European dress the lion yawned knowingly, when Mushettet catching him by the ear, he soon reposed to sleep. My salaam was partly returned after some time, when the Sheikh asked me to be seated. This I did, and left old Kathem, in very flowing language, to tell how great his guest was ; that I was English ; that an English steamer was in a short time coming down the river ; that the English were always friends of the Arabs : to which I nodded consent, adding, that I trusted it would always be so. The chief,

quite a young man, looked for some time very morose ; I returned it with as much steadfastness as I could muster, and remarked it openly to Kathem: this produced from him such encomiums on the Sheikh, that he was sure to treat us hospitably, and that we would not be shortcoming on our part, at which Mushettet seemed satisfied, and changing his looks entered into conversation. I then ordered Kathem to take out a robe of fine scarlet cloth, a pair of yellow boots, several loaves of refined sugar, a quantity of tea, coffee, cinnamon, cloves (of which they were very fond), and some tobacco, all of which were placed before him. I also told Kathem to see that the Sheikh's people had something given to them, when he swore it was good, ordered coffee and an Arab to escort us, and that we were under his protection ; after the usual compliments, and armed with this Thesiar (a man to see us safe), we departed.

It was 6 a.m. as we left Mushettet's tent, the sun rose, and the morning was fresh and beautiful. The sail was soon hoisted, and we dropped down to the Seeyed, when we were immediately surrounded by reed-huts, and the river was black with canoes of every description. The banks were crowded with men and women ; the first were ugly-looking customers : seeing Mushettet's man they were evidently disappointed of their prey. The women brought us eggs, butter, and fowls for sale ; but as they were great thieves, and would perhaps make an excuse for

getting up a quarrel, Kathem would not allow them to come on board, and the Thesiar was very imperative to the same effect. At 9 o'clock we reached high mounds on the right bank, called Akaysheh, at which place the river sends off two branches, called the Dumaneyah, and becomes very narrow and shallow, its greatest depth in some places being not more than seven feet, and the breadth sixty yards. The inlets are no longer to be feared, nor the El-bu-Mahomed, for in this part of the river there is little plundering. The banks were covered with brushwood, and the long grass was saturated with dew. Franklin rose in every direction, and called to each other from shore to shore, or skimmed across the surface of the water. In the distance more herds of buffaloes proclaimed the vicinity of some of the El-bu-Mahomed tribe, whose black mashoofs* and terradahs lay alongside the bank of the river, while their yellow serriefts were to be seen along the edge of the marsh. These latter, as before mentioned, are built of reeds; a few are tied together with bands of the same material, sometimes prettily coloured; they are cut to equal lengths, and placed in a row to form the walls. Of these also are formed stretchers and girders, which are covered with mats, but the top sides are done in open-work, prettily arranged, and not unlike the rustic summer-houses of England. These serriefts are principally occupied by the women. Another kind of

* The mashoof is made of four mulberry planks and bitumen; the terradah of reed and bitumen.

abode, and principally for the men, is the cooh, a succession of low arches of reed, tied like the above and springing from the ground, over which mats are thrown ; these arches are left open at both ends, and rugs are placed on either side. They are sometimes spacious, and long enough to contain one hundred men ; ranged in two lines under this arch, they form, with their fine dark-bearded visages, a most characteristic picture, set off, as it often is, by the kerchief of red and yellow : the latter of undyed golden silk, passed over the head and tied round it by a brown woollen rope, which hangs with a silken tuft on one side. In these coohs the wild Maadan enjoys the *dolce far niente* ; his gun or spear is by his side, the prow of his long mashoof rests on the shore, while his children rove naked through the marsh or cross the deep and open water perched on the backs of their buffaloes. Whole herds of these enormous brutes, guided by the call of one of these urchins—in itself something very peculiar—wend their way to the most distant pastures. Lions, wild boars, and other animals, abound in these fens, which seem also congenial to man, for here he is found well made, tall, and athletic ; and the women are fairer than the generality of their sex on the desert. The latter are the merchants of the tribe ; they store butter, gather rice, weave mats and baskets, which they convey in their light canoes as far as Ezra's tomb and Ghurnah, and sell for glass and bead ornaments, or for small gold pieces of money,

to be hung round their necks, or for mulberry planks, of which to build their mashoofs. They offered us fowls and butter, but would not take our modern Turkish money, though double the value of theirs, and demanded in exchange the old Arab coins of Bussoreh, particularly the rub—a small coin value 4*d.*—of which we had very little. Both young and old familiarly treated with us, and many a fine, dark, serious eye, glanced fearlessly at us, equally interested and amused, and many a fine bust swelled beneath the blue robe that hung loosely from their shoulders to the ground; their arms, necks, and heads are bare; coral, antique stones, shells, and silver coins, are used as necklaces, or tied to their black tresses, which hang in profusion over their shoulders.

At 9 a.m. we proceeded, and reached the village of Shatterah, where Mushett generally resides; but there were no Arabs there. At 11.45 a.m. we reached the mosque or white dome of Abdullah ibn Ali, which was built on a rising ground a little distance from the left bank; many men were collected at the entrance of the tomb. There the Arabs of the place perform their vows, and to pacify the spirit of the shrine offer sheep and fowl, which they cook and eat on the spot, when the women go they bedaub the walls with henna, their most precious gift.* Arabs

* Henna is a herb found near Bender Abbas, in the Persian Gulf, which gives a reddish-brown dye, with which the Arab women dye their hair, nails, and the palms of their hands.

may be often seen leading a sheep, with water and fire-wood, accompanied by a boy, for whose safety the father had promised to perform 'Nider,' a sacrifice to ward off the evil eye, or any misfortune. At the tomb they kill the sheep, a barber shaves the boy's head, ejaculating, as he proceeds, prayers and praises. The sheep is then killed, roasted, and, as already stated, eaten by the party (an oriental picnic) amid great rejoicings. As we had a fine northerly breeze favouring us, we soon reached another tomb and shrine on a high mound, called Abu Roda, built simply of reeds. Dhumud, the brother of Mushettet, was here; he despatched a boy after us for some tobacco: off went the urchin's abba as he jumped into the river right ahead, and swam towards us; he was picked up by the boatmen, who tied a bag of tobacco on his head, when he returned to the shore without any difficulty. The favourable wind made it easy for us to appease this chief, the last of the El-bu-Mahomed.

Rising above the vast plain, a scene of waste and desolation could now be discerned, the deep-blue dome of the tomb of the Prophet Ezra, far to the south, dominating over and characterising these trackless marshes of the Tigris. '*Comme les idées religieuses sur tout autre pensée!*'* We arrived at the tomb at 3.15 p.m.; the reach leading towards it runs north-west; so we had to lower sail and

* Madame de Staël.

drop down beneath its white walls, which beetle over the stream, affording protection and a mart within the sacred precincts of its little court to the traveller, pilgrim, or native trader, who visit its neighbourhood. No troops garrison its walls, but sanctity has preserved and repaired them, a witness of the mighty revolutions which have effaced and altered everything but the spot of earth where the bones of the Prophet are laid. Our men, harnessing themselves to the track-rope, swam ashore, and, forming a line of well-made fellows (perfect specimens), tracked us into a position along the bank. Ozeir, as the Arabs call Ezra, is on the right bank ; beyond its square court there are no buildings, and three lofty date-trees, close to, serve with the dome to vary the monotony of the scene. Two large boats, laden with coffee, sugar, and indigo, lay here, waiting for the arrival of others and a re-enforcement by them ere proceeding to Baghdad ; some smaller craft lay on the opposite bank, and several Arabs punted along their dark mashoofs ; the younger ones were naked, the others wore white shirts, which, contrasting with their fine, brown, well-made limbs, were æsthetically characteristic. They wear a narrow leathern girdle round the waist, next the skin ; the shirt is tucked under this girdle, and hangs in pretty folds from the waist : it may not be of the most snowy whiteness, yet there is something classic and picturesque in the figure before you, as he stands at the extreme end of his long, low

skiff, waiving over the water his light bamboo, prettily reflected in the dark shadows of the stream as he silently glides along.

Inside the shrine were a few Jews, some sitting and some asleep in the niches of the wall ; they are just tolerated by the Arabs, who, on every occasion, extort money from them. The Jew conciliates such as have power, and flies as soon as his patron disappears : it is well if he does not linger ; for one poor fellow joined our party from whom they had taken six hundred shamies (about 50*l.*). My Arabs seemed to sympathise with him, saying he had been badly treated, but yet to me they murmured that he was only a Jew. The look of satisfaction which, amidst all his troubles, he gave me, showed that though he felt the tyranny, yet, like Ezra of old, he also felt that he was of 'the holy seed,'* and despised them and their ignorance. To visit these hallowed walls, he said, reminded him of the prophet, who fasted by the river of Ahava, the recorder of the building of the second temple, and the restorer of their sacred Law.

The follower of Islam also says his '*fatha*,' or prayer, as he passes, for his faith recognises also in that tomb the resting-place of one of the prophets of God ; and if his bones are not laid here, like the empty tomb of Anchises, raised by Æneas, it will serve to perpetuate the memory of the divine historian, who

* Ezra, ix. 2.

chronicled the march in triumph of the Jews from this side of the Euphrates to Jerusalem. We, too, can say our *fatha*, and thank God in Ezra's words, who has preserved us from the enemies by the way, 'for His mercy endureth for ever.'* Shuster, Sus, or Shushan, the palace of the great king, the residence of Cyrus in Ezra's time, is at the foot of the mountains before us, and the river Ahava, or Ahawaz, flows through the plain on the right. The river Tigris did not then occupy its present position near these walls, but the river above mentioned, which is now lost in these marshes. A little serrief (or mat-hut) rose on the opposite bank, and near it a few vines hung over the water, the first sign, strange to say, of gardening and civilisation since leaving the neighbourhood of Baghdad.

We left at 4 p.m., and reached a village called Zichea at 7.30, when it was quite dark. As we approached the village we passed the first grove of date-trees since leaving the vicinity of Baghdad, when we were saluted by an order to come-to, which we immediately obeyed. We had now entered the Montifik territory, the chiefs of which are sovereign in this part of Irak, and their agent at this place has a prescriptive right to exact seventy-seven shamies,† or 7*l.*, from every native-laden boat. I had a carpet

* Ezra, iii. 11.

† The intrinsic value of the shamie is 10½ Constantinople piasters, 112 of which equal the pound sterling.

spread in front of the cabin, to which place we removed our lamp to receive the authorities, who, in the shape of two wild-looking fellows, armed with huge sabres and clumsy pistols, soon presented themselves. Finding we were English, and in English boats, which were exempt, they showed no opposition, and were very civil. They inquired after the news, and had their coffee, when I expected they would leave; but first they asked for slippers, then for pipes, which they received: but we had no tobacco, which for some time they would not believe. A few shamies in lieu thereof, however, set matters right, and after sundry salaams we were again under way. The Tigris is here very narrow and deep, and the black waters of the marshes were everywhere flowing back into it; the banks were low and marshy in appearance, and divested of trees, cultivation, and even of reed huts: the effect of the sea-tide is felt and visible on the banks. We reached Ghurnah at 2 a.m. in three hours, with a fair wind from the Zichea.

SHAT-EL-ARAB.

قورنه و بصره

GHURNAH is beautifully situated between the Euphrates and Tigris. The angle of land formed by them is thickly planted with date-trees, as are also the opposite banks. The Euphrates at this place

is a noble river, but the Tigris is small; its waters have, ever since leaving Coot-el-Amarav, gone to swell its now formidable neighbour, in the centre of which, up stream, rode at anchor an old Turkish brig. The *detritus*, borne by the floods and rivers from the mountains of Persia on our left, has raised the basin of the lower Tigris, and thrown its waters towards that of the Euphrates, which has no such barrier to impede its course along the low-lying confines of Arabia. The river formed by their confluence—the Shat-el-Arab—is a noble sheet of water, deep enough for large sea-going ships up this place.

Ghurnah, a populous walled town a few years ago, can now only boast of a few ruins, some huts, and about one thousand inhabitants. Boats of all sizes and descriptions, from the light mashoof to the high-pooed and ship-like mashouah,* lay along the banks of the Tigris. A serrief served as a custom-house, where a tax of five shamies on each boat is levied, and a duty is exacted on all goods proceeding up the Euphrates. On a little mud plateau on the bank of the river sat several Arabs round a fire, discussing politics, while a black slave prepared their coffee on the embers. They rose politely as I approached, and made a place for me in their circle. The topic of conversation was whether the Sheikh of the Montifik would force the Pasha of Busrah to acknowledge him or not (his immense

* Arab name for a heavily-built teak vessel or cargo-boat.

hordes, consisting of thousands of mashoofs, horsemen, and camel-mounted troops, occupied the river and the country in front). During the conversation regarding the Pasha the word *kuthelhah*, 'He killed her,' often repeated, excited my curiosity. On rising to leave, one of my Arabs, keeping close to my side as I walked down to the boat, pointed out a caïque belonging to, and lately arrived from, Busrah ; where lay dead a lovely Busrawee lady, whom I met in Gerarah—of whom more hereafter—and how to dispose of her, equally with the movements of the Montifik, were the topics of the hour.

On reaching the boat, which lay a bright-brown picturesque mass on the dark waters by a grove of date-trees, I gave orders to depart. The wind fell as we dropped down the Tigris, past Ghurnah, into the Shat-el-Arab ; but the tide, running up, bore us against our will into that great and majestic river, the Euphrates, swollen by the reflux of the numerous floods it had sent off on its course, and by the addition of the whole surplus waters of the Tigris. In the centre lay a half-buggalo, half-brig, a wretched old Turkish gunboat, literally falling to pieces ; a most picturesque object, however, and in perfect keeping with the mud walls and crumbling bastions which appeared through the date-trees. We had to hoist sail, in order to get back into the Shat-el-Arab. All now was right, as we supposed ; but learning that the Sheikh of the Montifik, in

order to show his power and reduce the wretched Governor of Busrah to acknowledge him as Sheikh of that tribe, might stop so large a craft as ours, full of cargo, with an Englishman on board, and thus endeavour to insure consular influence in his favour, I resolved to engage a very small mashoof, similar to hundreds which glided unmolested over the waters, and, provided with my gun, to proceed in it through the hordes of the Montifik to Busrah, which place, if all was plain sailing, I could reach that evening,—sorry, however, to leave a little English boy and an Italian, who were under my auspices, on board ; but I knew they were well cared for, and my departure insured a speedier and safer arrival at Busrah : so I embarked, and soon found myself alone with two of the wildest-looking individuals I had ever seen. We left Ghurnah at 7 a.m.

The mashoof is so frail that, in order to render her steady, one is obliged to sit or lie down on the little plank which separates you from the water ; as in the Venetian gondola, the polers stand at either extremity, one's elbows could hang over the sides, and you can easily paddle in the water. The expedient resorted to by the sailor, in the Arabian tale, of using his legs for paddles, was evidently suggested by this facility. We, however, had a sail, and a bamboo for a mast ; so, with wind and tide in our favour, nautilus-like, we swept along at the rate of about twelve miles an hour. The river was half a mile wide, and the banks on

either side, with few exceptions, presented thickly-set groves of date-trees.

In half an hour we reached the Hawezah river, which flows through date-groves into the Shat-el-Arab on the left bank. Below it is a village called Neshwah, from whence caravans proceed by the shortest road to Hawezah, Shuster, and Disful. At 11 a.m. the Arabs pointed out, in among the date-trees on the right bank, the village of Dair, in which is a small mud enclosure. Passing a similar village and canal on the right, called Harthah, we came, at 1 p.m., to a long reach, on the left bank of which there were no date-trees: it is called Chitabaun. An armed party of Arabs squatting on the bank here hailed us, in no very elegant language. They were answered by a holy ejaculation, and an abundance of quiet abuse between themselves was indulged in by my Arabs as the wind and tide bore us rapidly along.

We were now evidently approaching the great Montifik encampment, as both banks were covered with black tents; and hundreds of low, long-beaked canoes, and boats of every description, lined the water's edge, or seemed to creep across the stream. The hum of voices, war-songs, and the firing of guns, were distinctly audible. Sheikh Nassur, brother to Sheikh Mansoor, had seized the Masnud of Suk-i-Shukh, or the seat of the Arab government in this part of the world, and come down, after having driven out the late Sheikh—as will be hereafter explained—to enforce

his authority, to beard the Pasha of Bussoreh, and to exact the usual tribute from the tribes which, as far as the sea, are, with few exceptions, in allegiance to their power. They rule over the country on the west bank of the Euphrates, from the marshes of Babylonia to the sea ; they are the successors of the Arab kings of Hira, of Naaman ibn Munder, Judaimah, and of Kais-el-Massood, who were subsidized by Chosroes, and received the produce of Obelah, one of the Bussoreh canals, as the price of guarding these frontiers from Bedouin incursions ; they have also succeeded to the territory and power of the Rubeyah ibn el Wail, and the Ameers already alluded to ; but the present state of the Turkish authorities, and these regions being so remote from the seat of government, and so difficult of access from Baghdad, has raised the rulers of the Montifik to absolute power. By a generally admitted right they now rule over the tribes of this part of Arabia as far as the Persian Gulf, and represent them. The word Montifik may mean an amalgamation of tribes ; they were first united under Sheikh Maanah, a refugee sheriff of Mecca, who had obtained considerable influence over the tribes of this part of Arabia. His son, Saadoon, was the originator of the patronymic or family name of their Sheikhs, which they now bear. They have power of life and death, and all matters of dispute or criminality are referred to them : in every case they exact fees ; and for every murder, whether justi-

fiable or not, one thousand shamies is demanded by the Sheikh as the price of blood—a sum nearly equivalent to 100*l*. Like all half-civilised nations, little account is taken of life ; and just before my arrival a man was beheaded because he was found to have disobeyed the orders of the Sheikh. Their liberality is unbounded, and they daily feed thousands in their tents, and hundreds of tons of dates are exacted and distributed yearly in the desert by this lordly despot, to secure his influence ; from which liberality, according to the Arab philologist Ferouz-abadi, the word *Montifik* is derived. The wild Aniza, the Duffeer, and others from the high plains of Nejd, seek their friendship and hospitality. I am told that a utensil which can cook a hundredweight of rice at a time is enumerated as among the wonders of his camp. Of all the Arab tribes, he alone keeps a paid cavalry called *Fedawee*, and mounts them on his best mares, that they may not fear for their animals in the fight.

Our small canoe, the exact counterpart of hundreds which now darkened the waters around, passed unobserved. The wind blew freshly from the north down a fine broad reach of the river, sweeping as far as the eye could see to the south-west, amid extensive date-groves, which seemed to rise from the water, for the tide was at the flood. On the left bank rose, from amidst its fellows, a remarkably tall date-tree, which distinguishes the reach above *Maaghil* ; where, after passing an island planted with date-trees, we arrived

at 4.50 p.m. I was now at home in my own residence, and learnt the details of the present feud between the Montifik and the Governor of Bussoreh, which had formed the subject of conversation at Ghurnah when I was there.

It appears that on the death of Sheikh Fahed, the brother of Hamood, one of the most influential Sheikhs of the Montifik, there was a dispute for the sheikhship between the sons of Rashid, another brother of Hamood, and Faris son of Ajyl, Hamood's son, Ajyl, having poisoned Rashid his uncle, who, according to Moslem law, would have succeeded to the Musnud. And now the sons of Rashid, Monsoor and Nasir, claimed the sheikhship, saying that their cousin, Ajyl, poisoned their father at a banquet ; they therefore attacked him after the death of his father Hamood, and killed him, but Faris, his son, being at Suk-i-Shukh, proclaimed himself Sheikh. Hamood, whose title was undisputed, was grandfather of Faris. Monsoor and Nasir were his grandnephews.

Omar, a brave chief, much liked by the Arabs, took Monsoor's side at Suk-i-Shukh ; but he was beaten by Faris, who, when the fight was over, overtook him, as he was wounded, and they say that while weak from loss of blood, and leaning against his mare, in cold blood he ruthlessly murdered him ; and this raised bitter, civil, and family war among the Montifik.

Monsoor, Nassur, and Mishari, a brother of Omar,

all actuated by feelings of revenge for blood, inherent in every Arab, were thirsting for the opportunity of exacting a severe retribution, particularly Mishari, for the blood of his murdered brother. Faris was stigmatised by his opponents as Ibn Ajyl, the first to shed the blood of the chiefs of the tribe. Nassur, the warrior of the party, promised that Faris should be given over to Mishari, in order to pay the price of blood, and be sacrificed by him to the manes of his murdered brother. The hostile parties met in the plain between the Shat-el-Câr and a dry watercourse, where Nassur, taking advantage of the uneven nature of the ground, posted himself with a strong party of the Baaj, intending to charge the enemy in the rear after they had passed, the dust and confusion of the other party in some measure concealing his movements. The Shat-el-Câr (the same perhaps as the Dzu Câr, in the valley of which assembled, it is stated, the Arab tribe of the Beni Bekr, before commencing the war with Chosroes, to assert their independence) flows from the Euphrates below Diwaneyah, but a long way above Suk-i-Shukh it was swollen by the summer rise, and rolled rapidly before them. The Gezair matchlock-men* hung on either side, and were

* Gezair signifies 'isles' in Arabic. These isles are formed by the marshes of the Tigris and Euphrates, and are very extensive. The natives of them are a peculiar and powerful race : their chief styles himself Ameer-el-Gazair, or 'The Lord of the Isles.'

not an inconsiderable body of infantry. As none of the chiefs on Monsoor's side rode out to challenge, which augured fear, they pressed on eagerly until both parties drew up close to each other ; and several chiefs on Monsoor's side were forced to engage single parties in the front, in which the relative speed of the horses and facility of turning and wheeling were fully tried. In these fights the swiftest horse gets away, and pursues in his turn ; the rider, being safe to fly or to charge, harasses his enemy, until he wounds and unhorses him, when the great prize, the mare, is taken by the victor. Death is seldom, except where there is blood to avenge, the consequence of defeat. A series of real conflicts now began to take place ; blood was drawn, and many were unhorsed, and Faris's skirmishers, shouting and exciting each other, seemed to have the best of it: which advantage their chief endeavoured to improve by moving forward a vast herd of camels from the rear, which were driven in to cover their charge, and create dust and confusion in the ranks of Monsoor, who, however, rapidly retreated, and thus drew Faris along the plain. Nassur, amid the dust and turmoil, unobserved in the nullah, at this critical juncture issued from his ambuscade, and with his followers, the Baaj, rushed in one compact body on the rear of Faris's party.* He fought, they say,

* Nassur is celebrated for this mode of fighting. Most Arabs during the conflict hide their faces from the foe.—*Personal Observations.*

like a demon, with his head uncovered, his long auburn tresses floating in the wind, as, sword in hand, he rushed on the enemy; Monsoor's party simultaneously wheeled round, and changed a feigned retreat into a desperate attack in front. Surprise occasioning a panic Faris found himself hemmed in and deserted; the Gezair Arabs fled, and in their place were the hostile Zobaid. With a small party of his faithful followers he fled, plunged into the Shat-el-Câr on his right—to place, if possible, that barrier between himself and his pursuers. He was, however, unable to stem the torrent, and losing his horse, being encumbered by his chain armour,* he was overtaken and made captive by a party of the enemy. Abdullah, the brother of Faris, seeing his party routed, was obliged, after severe fighting, to retreat on foot and abandon his horse. A Baaj horseman recognised the wounded chief as he was endeavouring to hide himself in the broken ground, and was induced, by the promise of a large sum, to convey him to the Zobaid chief's tent. Mounting Abdullah behind him, he made off for their encampment. The black tents of the Zobaid were just in sight: a few minutes more and Abdullah would have been safe in the tents, but a party of horsemen approached in pursuit, and, after a fearful race, overtook them, amongst whom was Mishari, the brother of Omar, who had been so ruthlessly slain. As may be sup-

* Chain-armour is always worn by the chiefs of the Montifik.

posed, the meeting was Arab-like—cold-blooded, silent, and merciless in the extreme. There was no fight; those who accompanied Mishari stood on one side and exclaimed, '*Ullah-ho Akber!*' as they saw him rush, tearing the scarves off the heads of the captives, and recognising Abdullah in the defenceless man plunge his sword into his breast, and, cutting off his head, besmear his garments with the blood, as the trophy of his revenge. Thus fell Abdullah, a chief among the Montifik, an innocent victim of his brother's cruelty and want of judgment.* Faris was conducted by Monsoor towards Suk-i-Shukh. He would have suffered the same fate, but, as above vowed, it was the privilege of Mishari to exact the price of blood. The tomb of his father Ajyl, not far from the Shat-el-Câr, lay on the road; it was a convenient halting-place. Faris entreated that he should be slain there and buried in the tomb of his father. Mishari was absent, the fate of Abdullah was unknown, and Nassur was bound by his vow to deliver the captive to him. In the meantime the shrill cry of women was heard, and the wives and daughters of the fallen chiefs approached the tomb, tearing their hair, beating their hands on their breasts and knees, and, in a manner peculiar to the Arabs, throwing dust on their heads, they mingled among their brothers and cousins. Faris's daughter,

* The writer was personally acquainted with Abdullah; he was tall, handsome, fair, and a born warrior—the *beau idéal* of an Arab chief.

a woman of great beauty, threw herself on her father, who still sat at the door of the tomb, and was reluctantly led from his feet by the women of her tribe, and almost dragged past Monsoor and the haughty Nassur, who waited sullenly the arrival of Mishari, as he looked on her father as the miserable victim whose death should soon expiate the blood of Omar. Thousands of Arabs formed a spacious ring round the mound; they fired volleys and danced with maddened gestures in circles on the desert, when suddenly a rush was made to meet Mishari, who was seen riding quietly through the vast ring of horses, spears, and men, towards Monsoor.

On his arrival, the awful '*Thekbir, Ullah-ho Akber,*' again resounded through the crowd, as the head of Abdullah is rolled from a bag, still bleeding, on the ground, and Mishari stands before Monsoor and Nassur smeared with his blood. The eagle eye of Monsoor glanced from Faris to the group of women clustered round his lovely daughter, who frantically got away and threw herself at his feet a veiled mass of screaming woe. To satiated revenge succeeded a feeling of love, horror, and remorse. The Chief rose, advanced towards Faris, and said, 'There is no greatness or power but in God; Abdullah has returned to his Creator, who does not want or require more than one life for that of Omar, therefore I bid thee rise.' Then, giving his hand, he pronounced the word *Salameth*, and, as a proof of his sincerity, demanded

his daughter in marriage, which was accorded ; and thus ended this long and bloody feud. Faris retired from the scene, never again to aspire to the Sheikship, while Nassur, as the result of his victory, was now here, claiming the allegiance of the river tribes and the recognition of his brother's power by the Turkish authority.

Such was the political aspect of affairs on the Shat-el-Arab when I arrived at Maaghil, which is an extensive mansion on the right bank of that river, on the western shore, where the deep water impinges, surrounded by date-groves and lying about four English miles to the north of Bussoreh. The marshes of the Euphrates extend to the back of these date-groves, and beyond them is the tertiary formation, or extreme limits of the plains of Arabia. Hordes of Arabs nestle in reed-huts under the trees ; they seldom cultivate, but principally trust to the produce of the date for their subsistence, while the river supplies them with quantities of fish. The English flag was waving over the English dépôt of Maaghil, and a Belouch guard saluted me as I landed.

The history of early European settlements in the East, if not now a useful is an interesting study. The conquests of the Phœnicians and European nations of the West rose first from the enterprise of a few wandering and trading adventurers in search of the produce of India. The tide of civilisation and conquest, which in those days flowed westward, is

returning again to the East. England has founded an empire in India, and merchants from Britain monopolise the trade of her vast provinces, and have established dépôts and factories in this remote country to protect and facilitate their trade, while Russia is pressing forward from the north-west. The fame of the wealth of Ormus*—enshrined in Milton's sublime poetry—and the Portuguese settlements on the pearly shores of the Persian Gulf, of which scarce a trace remains, fade before the astonishing picture presented to our view as the result of the more extended and successful operations of our countrymen. Sailing past the above sites—far more enterprising than their European predecessors—they sought, at the confluence of the Euphrates and Tigris,

* Ormus Bahrein, Grain, or Grenada. The town of Ormus on the mainland was built in the eightieth year of the Hegireh (in our seventh century), by Shah Mahomed. The Persians held it up to the year 1278, when family feuds and a desire of independence and Arab alliances induced the Ameer Baha ood Deen to transfer the town to the island in 1312. It was then the great emporium of Indian commerce, which found its way through Persia by caravans into Europe, and up the Persian Gulf *via* Baghdad. The heirs and successors of Baha ood Deen reigned supreme up to the year 1507, when its governor, Seyd Fahad ood Deen, was vanquished by Albuquerque and cruelly strangled. It was subject to the Portuguese up to 1622, when the English and Persians took the place from Seyed Mahomed Shah, a Portuguese nominee, in the reign of Shah Abbas and our Charles I.; Gombroon, on the mainland, was then called, after Shah Abbas, Bunder Abbas, which is now the port for Yezd and Southern Persia.

a dépôt with which they could connect Eastern and Western Asia. A factory was built at Bussoreh, to which agents were appointed with unlimited powers,—a vast credit, well-equipped vessels, and well-supplied magazines, were placed at their command ; and Maaghil,* on the banks of the Euphrates, was their summer residence.

Delightfully cool in winter, the Bussoreh climate is at that season well adapted to the European constitution ; but in the end of summer and during the autumn months it is very trying, owing to the absence of the northern wind (the Shamaul), which blows for forty days in early summer, and carries off the miasma from the marshes which cover the country ; there the lofty rooms, open corridors, extensive gardens of Maaghil, secure every cool current of air which floats down the broad north-westerly reach of the river above, and affords the best position for a European dépôt which could be selected, and was provided with every luxury which the enervating heat of summer required and that ingenuity could suggest. Stories of English expeditions and the princely conduct and power of Latouche, Manesty, and Colonel Taylor, are often the themes of conversation, particularly of those Arabs in the neighbourhood who were protected by them from

* The place is called by the Arabs Kut-el-Fringee, or 'European Court,' and the name Maaghil, in Arab geography, belongs to a canal which borders it to the south. See Abul-Feda.

the plunder and exactions of their more powerful brethren.

About forty years ago, Mr. Manesty possessed nearly the whole of this bank, then covered with more extensive gardens and cultivation. On his removal or retirement the place fell, for a short time probably, into native hands, and was claimed by Hamood, Sheikh of the Montifik above mentioned. Colonel Taylor built the present mansion on the site of the old one, and restored its salutary retreat. At that time few Englishmen ventured to explore the deserts and rivers to the north, unless as a matter of perilous duty. Those who have traversed them can only duly appreciate the proud gratification of the English officer, after a journey across the wide belt of desert which connects Egypt, Syria, and the Euphrates, when he reached Maaghil, bearing the first intelligence of the victory of the Nile. He found there an agreeable party, a hearty welcome, and a few English ships ready to take charge of his despatches.* Information on important subjects was often thus transmitted to India during the war in Europe, and was attended with the most happy results, and illustrated the importance of this distant settlement. As, however, the Turkish empire and Moslem pride declined, and as famine, plague, and depopulating tyranny ruined her provinces, the bigotry and fanaticism which rendered it

* Colonel R. Taylor has often recounted to the writer his feelings on that happy occasion.

impossible to obtain a secure settlement in the interior, at a distance from the coast, gradually gave way before the influence of trade, civilisation, and power. The English name became respected, the English Residency afforded an asylum from the horrors of despotism ; from a commercial it became a political agency, and the principal authority was transferred from Bussoreh to Baghdad.

But Maaghil saw another period, more melancholy but not less interesting ; for here, amid the roar of cannon from English steamers and Bussoreh's old Saracenic batteries, terminated the disastrous but renowned expedition which first carried the English flag down the celebrated and hitherto secluded waters of the Euphrates. A tablet of black marble, which I raised against the inner corridor of the building, commemorates the names of those who perished and those who were rescued on the loss of one of the steamers, overturned by a fatal simoom during that expedition. This misfortune was succeeded by fresh efforts ; and subsequently three iron steamers, called the Euphrates flotilla, were put together here ; officers and troops (artillerymen) arrived from India ; but before the summer heats had well set in a deadly fever and dysentery broke out amongst them, which turned Maaghil into a hospital and its gardens into a burial-ground ; and many a narrow grave under the date-trees attests the last resting-place of a countryman.

From a government it became a commercial dépôt,

and continues so up to the present day. A foreign force of ten Belouches guards it; and it is visited weekly by our steamers, where they meet amidst congratulations and conviviality the officers of the Indian line of steamers and those from England, who supply them with English luxuries, stores, and provisions. The political importance of the prestige secured by these *réunions* is very great, and should be supported at all hazards.

Long teak canoes, scooped out of a single beam imported from the Malabar coast, convey the traveller from Maaghil to Bussoreh; a man with a paddle sits at either end, and works the canoe along; a white awning, fringed with a crimson curtain, protects from the sun, and soft mats, or beds and cushions, spread in the centre, invite to recline or sleep. Several creeks and canals, overshadowed by the acacia and date-trees, are passed, the most considerable of which are the Jubbaylah, Khurbutleyah, and Rubat on the right bank; to which succeeds the ditch round the walls of an old Bussoreh fort, which is very deep even at low tide. The marsh waters, to be mentioned hereafter, run through it into the river. Next to it is the creek of Bussoreh, which is entered through shoal water, the deep-water bank of the Shat-el-Arab being on the opposite shore, on which rise the walls of the Girdilan Fort.

It was on the 4th of April that I left the Shat-el-Arab and entered the Bussoreh Creek, at which

season everything looks well ; and the arrival of ships and buggaloes from India gave a business-like activity to the scene. The Turkish flag waves over a few reed-houses at the entrance ; shady seats, formed by mats and stumps of date-trees, were occupied by a few lazy nizams and Turkish kawasses, *employés* of the Custom-house authorities, who not unfrequently hold their little court at this place. They scanned our canoe as we entered, and, eyeing the Fringee reposing in his Indian gondola, made the usual salaam, and allowed us to pass without stopping.

Gliding past, we found ourselves under the walls of a fine old fortress on the left ; further on a mosque rose on the right. The court of the latter and the bank were crowded with Persians, men and women, pilgrims to the shrine of Meshed Ali. Boats to convey them up the Euphrates lay ready in the creek, to the sides of which were lashed several coffins, containing the remains of their departed friends. Some were already in their boats, which were so crowded that they appeared to be a floating mass of human beings ; and as they moved off they burst into one loud and pathetic chorus, in which the name of Ali was clearly distinguishable.

We were now close-pressed in a mass of canoes, boats, and stranded buggaloes, and the creek was not wider than an ordinary canal. As we passed on, it became more picturesque ; lofty date-trees waved immediately above us ; the banks were covered

with willow and yellow flowering acacia, which with the orange, lotus, and plantain-tree, grew in wild profusion. The most striking feature which presents itself to the traveller who arrives from the parched deserts of the upper stream is the great fertility and luxuriance which Nature here presents ; bowers of shade and overflowing streamlets are passed as he proceeds, and birds of bright plumage flit through the feathery branches above : but, alas ! as the abodes of man are approached, filthy dunghills rise from the banks, disgusting sights of wasted men and women in dirt and rags surround him, or wander among the ruins of fallen houses. Though he is in Bussoreh, he can scarcely believe it, until a turn of the creek brings him opposite the old English factory, which, comparatively speaking, is a habitable house, and presents at least a well-built wall, glazed windows, and a picturesque front, to the cushioned recumbent in the canoe.

At the entrance of the creek is a fortress, as above observed, which is called Menawee ; on the southern side it is occupied by guns and troops, and commanded by an officer, whom they dignify with the title of Admiral, and Pasha of Menawee, of whom a very sad story shall be afterwards related. The walls of Bussoreh extend from there at least four miles to the westward in a circular form, enclosing several square miles of mounds of bricks, deserted streets, date-groves, and ruined houses. That part of the

creek which is navigable, runs up for about three miles to the bridge of Bussoreh, called the Gisir-el-Ghuthbaun, or 'The Ship Bridge,' at which point alone the ruins are thinly inhabited; all beyond it to the walls on the west side being a desolate waste, the refuge of dogs, dying animals, and wretched paupers. The town extends about a quarter of a mile on the southern side of the creek, from the English factory to the bridge, which comprises the habitable part of Bussoreh, though the suburb of the present town on the river side of the factory is extensive, and contains a small bazaar of its own, occupied principally by boatmen and their wretched Arab chandlers, in whose stalls, fruits, broken muskets, old nails, dates, fish, and glue, are the articles of sale. Bussoreh, this suburb included, does not contain more than 5000 inhabitants.

On arrival at the English factory I was very kindly received by an Armenian lady, Mrs. Barseigh, the widow of the late English agent at this place, to whom the house belonged. Leaving her harem, she met me as I mounted the stair which led to the men's apartments with a slow and dignified bow, and accompanied me into the reception-room, welcomed me, and retired, stating that breakfast would be immediately on the table, which was shortly the case; and as Mrs. Barseigh did not again appear I had to partake of it alone: indeed, her visit was contrary to custom, but that she overlooked in her kind desire to welcome me. The rooms were very spacious and airy, laid down

with the cool and beautifully woven mats of Bengal, and furnished with red damask spring couches and chairs from Bombay. The windows opened on a garden of orange and mulberry-trees, and Bussoreh and its wretched walls were forgotten, as, after looking over the garden from the terrace, I sat down to a breakfast, the bread and butter of which were exquisite, Bussoreh being famous for the latter article.

A walk through the streets of this city makes one acquainted with the wretched poverty of the place, and the sloth of the Arab population. The caravan-serias, or khans, where the merchants transact business, are miserable places, occupied by Persian and Jewish merchants, whose assistants and porters are all blacks from Abyssinia, some free, some still slaves; and a mixed race of Abyssinians and whites forms a great part of the population. The khans, and Bussoreh in general, are guarded by a Belouch police from the coast of Mekran, and fishermen from the coast of Baherain monopolise all that is to be done in the wheat and other markets. After passing mounds of wheat and barley one has to find one's way to the Serai, over a heap of ruins, where the Turkish Pasha of Menawee presided. Accompanied by an Armenian merchant, I entered the miserable arch which formed the porch of the palace. A few Albanian irregulars, richly dressed (quite a phenomenon), sat there on guard; and in the room above the *porte cochère*, which was that of State, and at the window which looked over

the street, sat his Excellency, who, we were informed, was presiding over an auction, which was being held in his presence. We ascended, and found him seated on one end of the divan, which extended along the window, and on the other extreme of which sat an old Moslem, who, I afterwards learnt, was the Cadi, or head judge. He insisted on my sitting above and between him and the Pasha on the divan. Several merchants sat on the carpet at our feet on either side, and Jews occupied a lower floor of the room in front. Boxes of jewels were displayed on the carpet, and the auctioneer held in his hand a beautiful gold chain, an ornament of exquisite workmanship, about the value of which the Pasha and the Cadi were at variance; my Armenian friend bought it for about 100*l.* sterling, and subsequently told me its history.

It had belonged to the fair and beautiful Arab lady, well known to the male and female society of Baghdad and Bussoreh as Gul Beyaz, or White Rose, and remarkable for her wealth, her beauty, and her misfortunes. The daughter of a once powerful Arab Sheikh who settled at Bussoreh, she espoused one of the first and wealthiest merchants of that place, named Abd-ul-Wahab, who possessed innumerable lands and gardens, and square-rigged buggaloes, which traded to all parts of India. He settled on her a vast dowry, and every ship from the Malabar coast brought her rubies and gold ornaments from Trichin-

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opoly, and among them the chain in question ; but another woman sharing with her the affections of a husband, in a fit of jealousy she fled from him (for youth and beauty will be imperative), and exacted a divorce. But in the East such ladies are very unprotected, and being alone, and fearing the lawlessness of Bussoreh and the wrath of Abd-ul-Wahab (though, as far as his country's laws of honour go, a most excellent man), she flew for protection to the relatives of an Arab captain called Ali, who had a large commercial connexion with Baghdad, which, in command of a fleet of boats carrying merchandise, he was in the habit of visiting every year ; thither she had hoped he would take her. He married her, and she arrived at Baghdad as his wife, and under the protection of a husband ; but she was hardly established in her new home when she again sought a divorce, and, after many reverses of fortune, married no less a person than this Pasha of Bussoreh. But, as above related, a dark and horrible fate awaited her. After arriving at his Pashalic, whether from the counsels of the native merchants or others known to her, he resolved to send her back to Baghdad, and, if the Arab suspicion or report be true, he suborned them to poison her, and to pretend she died a natural death on the way up. These were the means by which he considered he saved his honour and by which he became possessed of her property, except such part as the Cadi was now endeavouring to share, anxious only to see that he

was not defrauded out of that portion which the Mahomedan law declared to be his right.

From this curious and miserable court we proceeded over the ruins of fallen houses to the bazaar, which, comparatively speaking, is a very fine row of buildings, raised by some Turkish governor, in a diseased state of mind, amidst a heap of ruins. As may be supposed, three fourths of the stalls are unoccupied, and the rest are filled with the silk and cotton webs of Guzerat, and with white and blue cloths of English manufacture from Bombay, the whole of which are of the coarsest texture and rudest patterns.

From the sink of misery, filth, and wretchedness, which the streets presented, I was glad to find myself transferred to a nice, clean little court, on the further side of which a flight of bricked stairs, edged with wood, led to a modest, but pretty little apartment, where Seyed Abraham, the last of the Bussoreh school, resided. The room into which we were ushered was surrounded on all sides by windows and doors constructed in pure Saracenic style, fretted in plaster, open-work, and coloured glass; between them were niches, the edges of which were covered with letters raised in relief, quotations from the Koran, and some of Seyed Abraham's composition. European chintzes and the silks of Shuster covered the divans, on which Khoja Stephaun, the Armenian, and myself, had not long to wait for our

host. I was anxious to be introduced to the greatest native Mahomedan Arabic scholar of his day, the friend and preceptor of Colonel Taylor, who assisted him most faithfully in his researches; the results of which are evidenced in the famous collection of Oriental manuscripts deposited by me in the British Museum. Down to a very late period, Bussoreh and Baghdad were celebrated for their literature and their colleges. He was the last of the Professors, and of those who had deeply read, and was well versed in Arabic literature. His language was terse, expressive, and extremely classic; he explained various words when he found I was at fault, which made our dialogue agreeable and charming. The Mahomedans believe that Arabic is the language of Paradise, and that in it God dictated the Decalogue and the Koran. The flood, and the great plague which followed, and which destroyed three quarters of Baghdad, occurred when Seyed Abraham was Cadi, and head of the colleges at Baghdad. At the beginning of the century (in 1800), Soliman Agha, one of the powerful Georgian chiefs, son of a Georgian slave, had established a settled government from Diarbekr to Bussoreh, and revived its colleges; but after the plague, Daud Pasha, when he (Seyed Abraham) was still a young man, massacred the long-acknowledged heads of this powerful family, who had escaped the plague, descendants of great Arab princes and Georgian women. Seyed Abraham of all its literary

men alone survived, and in comparatively extreme poverty, in his own words, passed the remainder of his days worshipping at the shrine of the literature of his ancestors. Such were the topics discussed over our coffee. We became great friends, and interchanged many visits. His philosophy and learned arguments were really interesting, and logically unanswerable.

Bussoreh, the ancient seat of Arab eloquence, was built by the command of Omar in the fifteenth year of the Hegireh by Alba, son of Ghaswan, after his taking Obelah (or Jubbaylah of the present day). It was improved by the orders of Othman and Maawiyah. The meaning of the word Bussoreh is, 'A land covered with pebbles.' Abdallah, the son of Zaid, the son of Abu Sufian, finished the city under Maawiyah.

We now proceeded to the bridge over the creek, and a primitive kind of custom-house, consisting of simply a covered landing of some extent, where the various captains of boats collected their cargoes, until there was sufficient to fill a barge or lighter, when it was despatched to their respective mashuahs.

The mashuah, or cargo-boat of the river, trading between Baghdad and this place, is confined to this particular line, and has been already described; it will carry from 70 to 90 karras of 4800 lbs. each, or about from 150 to 200 tons. There are only

five or six of the larger size in the trade, and about twenty carrying from about 35 to 50 karras: the larger ones are influentially owned as follows:—Two by Messrs. Lynch; two by Armenians under English protection, flying the British flag, and paying no tolls at either Baghdad or Bussoreh; two by Arab merchants of Bussoreh; and one by a Jewish merchant. These latter paid heavy tolls, and what privileges they enjoyed, except in being more cognisant of affairs, I could not learn; and in this position stood the owners of all the smaller boats. The larger were worth when new, or could be built at Bussoreh for 12,000 shamies, or 1100*l.* of our money. The larger craft always performed two trips a-year; the latter, being less influentially held, seldom more than one, and their cargoes up consisted principally of dates. The English and Armenian merchants contended respectively for the merchandise from Calcutta—indigo and Indian produce—and British manufactures direct from London; on which the duty once paid should exempt the vessels conveying it from further taxation, which the Turks, to oblige their influential owners, allowed, while the smaller boats were subject to all kinds of exaction.

We have here a basis for forming some idea of the statistics of the trade. The larger boats carried annually to Baghdad about 2000 tons, and I can safely say that all the rest did not secure altogether

half this quantity—say, 1000 tons—and that of the kind paying cheapest freight, such as iron, logwood, earthenware, &c. Indigo paid 10 shamies a box, and other goods 7 to 8 for ordinary packages = 6*l.* to 8*l.* a ton respectively.

The larger boats may, therefore, realise freight about 700*l.*, from which they have to pay the following for the charter:—

Shamies	1000
20 matchlock-men at 20	400
22 trackers at 50	1100
Flour, dates, clothes, and money to Arabs	
on road	500
Nokoda, or pilot	500
Head of the guard	300
	<hr/>
	3800
	<hr/>
	2500
	<hr/>
	6300

The charterers pay all expenses, and may realise from 70*l.* to 100*l.*; but the merchants above mentioned are bound to find them a cargo, if not a full one, in which, having a good part of the trade in their hands, they find little difficulty.

The principal staple of trade, however, and that which forms excellent ballast for the boats, and an ever-ready cargo to fill up with, is the date, which forms most convenient packages for transport pressed into mat-bags, each about 120 lbs., of which any quantity can be had. The date-groves form the

principal feature of the country, and their produce the chief sustenance of the people. A single date-tree standing away from its fellow has a most picturesque appearance. The lofty russet stem and capitals of golden fruit, clustering beneath a canopy of lofty waving plumes, densely green against that melting blue sky, forms a lovely contrast of warm and cold colouring admirably pleasing.

A date-tree will produce 150 lbs. of fruit, almost all solid. There are upwards of a hundred varieties, and the tree itself can be utilised in a hundred different ways—spirits, honey, and sweetmeats are made from the flower; ropes from the fibre, which is stiff and wonderfully tenacious; while its straight, tough, branch stems, being light, strong, and easily pierced, form an excellent material for furniture.

The loose alluvial sandy soil, slightly impregnated with salt, is most congenial to its cultivation, which could, if properly attended to—as in olden times—be made to cover the whole country, and form the best protection against foreign enemies; and beneath its shade the grape, peach, apricot and pomegranate, would flourish abundantly. A forest of verdure at one time extended from Felujah to the Persian Gulf, The date-tree is propagated principally from suckers; there are the male and female date, as in all the species, and the husbandman is obliged to shake the pollen of the one over the flower of the other,

in order that it should bear fruit. The best varieties are—

Hallawey	Bright and fine.
Khastawey	Rich.
Khodrawey	
Hasawee	Very small stone.
Bedrey	Dry date.
Zehdey	
Sair	Common date.

There are several other varieties famed for peculiarity of ripeness and flavour, but the above are the varieties known to commerce.

We passed down the creek embowered in plantain and acacia-trees, over which towered the lofty date. The tide was favourable, and Maaghil was soon reached. After dinner all the Arabs of the place had free access, and we held a regular durbar, at which Mahomed-ez-Zuaid, the Sheikh of Maaghil, duly attended. The conversation turned on the comparative weakness of the men of his tribe, and the union and power of the Jubbaylah men inhabiting the creek between this and Bussoreh; but they would all have to satisfy Nassur of the Montifik, who had moved down to the reach just above, and their horses had been all day crossing the river.

I had in my service an elderly and influential Arab of Zobair. Courteously he informed the assembly, with my permission, that Sheikh Nassur would do Maaghil and its English Resident the

honour of a visit on the following day ; over which Zuaid sighed out, 'Of course;' and the rest, as became them, received the notification in silence, and pulled away at their pipes. When coffee had been served it was conventionally understood that the mejlis, or durbar, was over.

Every day during this season ushers in fine, clear, bright, blustering weather ; cloth clothes may be worn, but no fires are required. The date-groves are in flower, and scent the air ; and the river of the Arabs is broad and swollen ; the banks are beautifully verdant, and covered with the pretty-leaved liquorice plant, which glitters and seems to grow under your eyes ; and down the long reach is seen the fleet of boats of every size blackening the water, following Nassur, like the boats on the Thames on the day of a boat-race ; but the crafts are very different, and the crews, with their gaudy head-scarves and flowing robes, more picturesque. They are crowded in their little boats, and thousands of spears and guns crop up in all directions ; they are soon like wild ducks ashore, and Nassur, surrounded by several chiefs, was conducted to a small, comfortable little room, where we had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of one of the greatest Arab chiefs of the age. He informed us that he had no consideration for the Turks ; that his brother, Monsoor, would be recognised as a matter of course, and his visit to Bussoreh was simply due to the prestige of the Sultan's name,

which it was just as well to secure. The Turkish Government had not a thousand men in the whole district—not enough to garrison the old walls of the place; so the Arab tribes were really independent, and when they settled their internal feuds, merely asked the ‘Stick with the Fez on it’* to sanction the arrangement. Captain Jones, commanding the *Nitocris* steamer, having arrived on the following day, we returned Nassur’s visit in great state, when I made a hasty sketch of his magnificent camel-hair or cloth tent.

Mr. Taylor having placed the services of his courteous Mahomedan mentor, a native and a chief in Zobair, at my disposal, I made preparations for a start from Bussoreh to Zobair, Jebbel Sannam, and Quait.

* See Sir John Malcolm’s *History of Persia*.

CHAPTER II.

COUNTRY BETWEEN MAAGHIL AND QUAIT.

LEAVING the old walls and ruins of Bussoreh, and a few straggling date-gardens, at noon we crossed a low, dark, marshy soil in the direction of Zobair. During several months of the year—from May to February—this is covered by a vast lake, the water ranging from a foot to eighteen inches in depth. At 1.20 p.m. we were in the centre of this now dry marsh ; to our right and left, however, appeared an expanse of water, or a white deposit of ammonia, washed from the ruins. Bussoreh, with its towers, alone breaks the long line of date-trees that fringe the horizon on the east, and right before us on the west appear the ruins of what they now call Old Bussoreh, in which grow two large nubuk or jujube-trees. The minarets and houses of Zobair, Dharbeh, and Ana, are the prominent objects beyond Old Bussoreh, on the south and western horizon. Mounds and hills of broken brick and *débris* break the surface of this lake deposit, and by their reddish hue, and the broken pottery and glass that lie scattered about, denote that they are the sites of old cities. At 2.30 we reached the tertiary soil on which Old Bussoreh is built.

I dismounted to take a sketch of all that remains standing of the ruins, which consist of a high pilaster-looking piece of a wall and a mosque they call the Mosque of Ali. I doubt very much about this site being ever built on by the followers of Mahomed : though they call it at the present day Old Bussoreh, 'Bussoreh of a Thousand Streams,' is more applicable to a position on the alluvial plains below, while the Babylonian or Chaldean Teredon may with more justice be sought for here, or in its neighbourhood.

From the ruins of Old Bussoreh we rode over a tertiary soil and slightly undulating plain to Zobair. The white-bearded chief who acted as my conductor, and who was a native of that place, pushed a-head to prepare his house, get his women out of the way, to cook, and spread the carpets for me. We passed some *débris* of tombs and old towers, and entered the narrow, dusty streets, at 4.50 : the chief received us at his own door, and we were conducted to a room so full of dust after sweeping that until it was allayed I sought refuge on the terrace. Here a fine view of the surrounding country presented itself ; the Desert, with its sandstone and granite pebbles, and loamy patches of red earth, extending in a boundless semi-circle from the south round westward to the north, only broken by the singular mountain of Jebbel Sannam, which rises like an island on the south-western horizon, and sets off, by its deep blue outline

the rich russet sunset hue of the vast occidental plain. On the east, beyond the ruins of Old Bussoreh, was a low mirage, bounded by a thin line of date-trees. Close to the town, on the south, are the ruins of Hashameah, consisting also of *débris*, surrounding a martello-like tower, and a few groves of tamarisk, while another tower called Siddera looms beyond it. Hassan Bussaree, a pine-apple-shaped spire, rises in the same direction, about 250 yards from the town. To the west rises an oblong mound of sun-dried bricks, called Shailah, about 70 feet above the level of the country around it, consisting of two mounds, one raised on the other. The diameter of the lower one is about 100 feet, and of the superstructure about 30 feet.

After a cup of coffee, I rode out to see the mound to the west, called Shailah, passing the old wall of the town, indicated by a ridge of bricks ; in some places it is, however, 10 feet, in others 20 feet. Between it and the town is a piece of cultivated ground, famous for its melons, watered by wells, each of which has a protecting tower. Looking from Shailah high mounds appear towards the marsh on the north-east, on one of which is a tomb called Ana, where a temple to the god Ana may have once stood.

Next morning was devoted to a close survey of the Jerri-Saada, the great canal cut, as history testifies, by Nebuchadnezzar, which bounded Babylonia on the west. On the one side lay Arabia and all its boundless tracts ; on the other, the

well-watered basin of the Euphrates, in which was the seat of Babylon and the cities of Assyria. All the glory portrayed and chronicled on mountain side, basaltic cylinder, or marble slab, have passed away, and nothing now but ruins and desolation to replace them. Such were my thoughts as I sat in the shah-neshin over the door, waiting while an Arab horseman rushed through the narrow, dark, deserted streets of Zobair, to summon the guard at early morn for a trip to the Jerri-Saada.

It was yet dark in the streets of Zobair when numerous horsemen crowded round the door. They were very silent ; but all seemed to know why they came, and whither bound, when my old white-robed mentor, entering with his crooked staff and yellow boots, proclaimed everything was ready for the start. Mounting, we filed along the muddy, windowless, low walls of the houses and streets, and were soon enjoying the fresh breeze of the Desert, our horses treading the rough, gravelly road, and the rolling pebble, surely and safely. After a ride of three miles to the west and south we came to the Jerri-Saada Canal, marked by a double ridge of mounds, about forty yards wide ; the bed was filled up, and, in this respect, resembled its fellow-arteries, through which flowed the life-blood of that wonderful organization which had once covered this country with smiling pastures and a numerous population, of which it is still equally capable.

The Jerri-Saada Canal (the ancient Palæcopus) winds in the vicinity of Zobair, about three miles in the direction of the south-east. Siddera tower, from the point where we reached it, bore $126^{\circ}30'$. Barasea, with its martello towers and walls, bore 196° to the south-west. About a mile from here the canal takes a more southerly direction. To the south-west, about two miles, are some enclosures, called the Menzils (or halting-places) of the Montifik: the country round to the S.S.E. is low and marshy. A good many wells and protecting towers are situated along the south-eastern plain. Leaving the canal to our right, we rode to Barasea, over some very flat, swampy ground, in which it is situated; it is in winter uninhabited, but the people of Zobair come out in the spring and cultivate melons, for which the soil appears well adapted, being light, full of red and white pebbles. There are also among them, and principally in the water-courses, some dark red stones and quantities of sand of a reddish tinge, in which quartz abounds.

We rode now in a south-westerly direction for an hour, hoping again to come upon the line of the canal, but to our astonishment we found no further traces of it; but right in the line of its bed is a vast amount of ruins. When we last saw it, its banks were high for some distance; some say it extended no further than this, others that in old times it fell into the sea. But where was the sea then? Most

likely close to this. Barasea is on high ground, with a depression in the centre, in which the rain-water settles, and is carried by a canal to a tank in Zobair. Returning, we met a procession of people firing guns, beating drums, and dancing their war-dance, making for a grove of cypress-trees near the water, to celebrate some fête. We now rode to the Siddera tower. It rises from the centre of a heap of ruins inclosed by a ridge of mounds, about 500 yards square. The whole, with the exception of the tower, is said to be very ancient. The latter is martello-shape, and built when the Wahabees attacked the place. It is terraced, and has two stories. The only access to the top is through a small door or hole, about twelve feet from the ground, so that it is secure against a *coup de main*—an excellent place for temporary refuge. For about two miles we rode in a fine level valley, to within a quarter of a mile of the town, to the tomb of Zobair, surrounded by innumerable graves. Zobair was a powerful Arabian chief, who fled to Bussoreh from Mecca immediately after the assassination of the Caliph Othman. He revolted against Ali, who fought and overcame him on this spot, where he was slain. This, the first battle fought by the followers of Mahomed in that civil strife which divided them ever afterwards into two equally powerful sects, occurred under these walls. From the tomb we went to Hadrameyah, a mile and a half from the town, and we found that the

water drunk at Zobair was conveyed on asses from this place in sheepskins. We passed an old wall, half-way to the village, and rode towards a grove of tamarisk-trees, which have a very picturesque appearance, their soft waving green forming a fine contrast to the red soil. Water is found here within two feet of the surface, and a canal leads any surplus supply from the watercourses around to this place, which after rain assumes quite the appearance of a small lake. The ground here is very productive, wheat returning tenfold to the fearless and enterprising cultivator. To the north is a strong martello-like tower, and there are close to it other works, consisting principally of walls and towers, intended to protect the people of Zobair when carrying water from the wells, and to scare their enemies from using them. The Wahabees—40,000 strong when they attacked the town—were unable to take the position.

At the extreme N.N.W. is an immense mass of ruins. Passing Shailah, we rode towards them, and came on the banks of the great canal, the continuation of the one we have already mentioned; it was here carried along the tertiary soil, obliterated here and there where it has been encroached on by the marsh. We rode along its bed north, and passed a high red mound, called Dar-el-Hammerah. Here the line of tertiary soil turns to the westward, and we proceeded to the tomb of Ana, which, with the exception of the dome, is a heap of

ruins. From the dome northward we could see the tents of the Montifik, and sheep and cattle relieved the gloomy and lonely appearance of the country. A large mound—which word should be looked upon in our archæological dictionary as the exponent of a once prosperous city—rose to the W.N.W., the direction from whence flowed the noble artery of the life and of the development testified by the ruins visible in all directions, now cold and silent as the grave, over which prowl a few Arabs, wild, squalid, and wretched. Time cannot obliterate the many traces of what the earlier generations of men raised on its surface, and its excellent soil even now appeals to the sympathy of modern civilisation.

Returning to Zobair, the road passes the Siddera tower. On entering the town we passed through the Maidan, in which two or three Arab tents, apparently deserted, were pitched. The Sheikh of Zobair came to see me in the evening. He is a fine man, like all the Hadarees, or town Arabs. He receives about 36% a-month from the Government. The town consists of about 800 houses—say 4000 inhabitants—and the Sheikh can turn out 800 matchlock-men at any moment. He assured me that he took into the field a larger force than the above when he fought with Ali Pasha of Baghdad against the Chaab Sheikh of Mahamrah, but admitted that the place has fallen off in population and prosperity since then. The great caravans, which crossed the Desert to Damascus in

the days of their forefathers, when the Cape route and Red Sea were scarcely known to commerce, were organized and despatched from this place, by which the produce of India found its way to the West. Their stations were Mugheir,* Hirah Anbar, Anah, Tadmor, from whence some went to Hamah and Damascus, and others to Aleppo and coast of Syria. The whole distance was not over 800 miles. As carriers and guards along this line the Zobairees were famous in former days, and also for the manufacture of the Arab cloak (or abah), which is carried on to some small extent to the present day. Salt is also made in Zobair by evaporating the water in shallow tanks.

Similar preparations and an escort having been secured for next morning, for a gallop to Jebbel Sunnam, we spread our carpets, laid over them our lahafs, and went to sleep. At 4 a.m. we were again in the saddle, and left the gate of Zobair about 4.30, riding over a pebbly soil and an undulating country. Early morn was blushing in the east as the interesting cavalcade pressed along, when suddenly, as if influenced by some unseen power, the horsemen simultaneously halting, dismounted. The Arab cloak was soon spread in front of each, and they stood motionless with uplifted hands, and then placed their foreheads on the ground in prayer. The effect produced was perfectly sublime—the mighty

* A great Babylonian city.

firmament was waking up to life, light floods of which rolled imperceptibly over it in every direction, and the vast plain with its deadness and silence encircled us. The men were in line when they halted, and now stood at the heads of their horses in their long white robes, with their faces towards Mecca. The scene was very imposing, particularly on the brown sward of the Desert, over which the darkness was not yet dispelled. After a two-hours' glorious morning ride at a gallop we crossed on to a higher level of the Desert plateau, which was covered with flowers and verdure. We passed on our left some very low black tents near some water, which exists here and there in pools; a few sheep were also visible feeding on a bushy shrub, which they appeared very fond of, not unlike the lavender-plant. Huge lizards abounded, and a peculiar kind which burrows in the earth, called by the Arabs *abbu el fishaish*; we also met a fox, and pursued a beautiful jerboa, which, to my great delight, we caught, one of the Arab horsemen, suspended from his saddle, having dexterously swept along the ground and thrown his cloak over it. It was the prettiest thing I ever saw. Its back was dark tawny, its belly and legs white, and its long, miniature, lion-like tail, waved over its back, on the top of which was a white tuft: it has the head of a mouse, perfectly white, with the eyes of a gazelle. I also saw a very large bird—whether an owl or eagle I could not tell—spreading its large dark

wings over the Desert. On the other side of Jebbel Sunnam the ostrich is found, and its eggs are often brought into Zobair. We again pushed forward with our horses at the gallop over a fine undulating plain covered with grass and green brake, and at 7.30 passed near a tower, which marked the site of a well, and in an hour saw some ruins, called Esfoaun, where there is abundance of good water; and in forty minutes, riding fast, though not at a gallop, we came to a dip in the plain or wady, running in the direction of Esfoaun, after passing which the ground begins to rise, for we are at the foot of Jebbel Sunnam, which assumes a reddish hue. We took four hours actual travelling in reaching it from Zobair: the ordinary time for the journey is about five; but, as above mentioned, I enjoyed seeing my cavalcade, all in line, galloping across the Desert, with Jebbel Sunnam as their Keblah, and was anxious to get there before the heat became intense.

At nine o'clock we ascended the mountain, and passed over masses of lava broken and tossed about on every side along the ridge, east and west. We were able to ride to the very top, from which the eye ranges in every direction over an unbounded plain. Shailah mound alone rose above the horizon, though both Zobair and Bussoreh were visible with the glass. I regretted very much to see nothing of Jerri-Saada. Berasea tower stood E.N.E.; Esfoaun appeared quite close. A vast plain extended to the south and west,

and a line E.N.E. of this bounds the undulating plain south-west of Bussoreh, and may be the banks of the Jerri-Saada.

Jebbel Sunnam is evidently of volcanic origin, and disappoints in this respect the ruin-and-temple hunter, whose first impression on seeing Jebbel Sunnam, and hearing its name, is that it was artificial, and a mound, like the Pyramids, raised to attest the grandeur of antiquity: but it has been shot up from the bowels of the earth; the principal ridge has a south-east-by-east and north-west-by-north direction; it throws off a spur to the south-south-west, the face of which is covered with yellow sand; to the east, low down the mountain, is a mass of volcanic matter, looking as if it recently had undergone the action of fire: it is composed of green lava and red earth in alternate layers. Very little blue lava was to be seen on the east side, whereas on the north-west that colour predominates. A red conglomerate is very common, and in some places a reddish-looking slate, set vertically, showed itself above the ground. Most of the watercourses have an east-north-easterly direction. Scarcely a shrub varied its burnt aspect, and there was not a yard of level ground on its summit. It is about a mile in diameter, and from the point where the ground commences rising to the base is about 700 yards, composed of drift-sand and volcanic matter: the hill itself is about 250 feet above the plain.

We now rode down to some tents, as above described, about an hour from the hill ; they were pitched close to a flash of water. We met some Sulaibeas, a peculiar people, on our road ; they wore a frock of antelope skin, with a hole in the top just sufficient for the head to pass through. These people live on what they secure by hunting, on roots, and gathering dry brush-wood ; gazelle is their principal food. Thin, tall, and sinewy, they walk across these plains, and have acquired the habits more of animals than human beings, of which they are, however, a fine type. They are considered and tolerated as Mahomedans, though they are said not to be so—nor even Arabs ; and my informers told me that they certainly do not pray or observe any precepts or dogmas as inculcated in the Koran. At the tents we fed and watered our horses. The sun was hot. I crept under a little, low, black, coarse tent, and, covered by my cloak, lay down to repose, intending in the evening to proceed to Zobair, while my guards cleaned their horses and also refreshed themselves with a siesta. I fell asleep, and when I woke up I found my face—horrible to relate!—close to that of a bearded, old, half-naked Sulaibee, who, scarcely knowing who was under the black drugget—for we must not dignify it with the name of a tent—had crept under the same shade, and in sleep rolled against me. The scene of the two sleepers would have been very unique had it been caught by an

European eye, and made me smile on waking at my extraordinary position. In the evening we entered Zobair.

The following morning again found us on the road, and this time we were bound for the shore of a creek of the Persian Gulf, which extends into this country in the direction of Zobair. We passed through the Hadrameah gate at 7.20, and came to a canal, but which evidently came not from the Khore, or marsh: we followed it to Daodan, beyond which a long low ridge terminates the tertiary soil and all traces of the canal. The road now passes over a dark alluvial soil to the ridges and mounds of a magnificent canal, 100 yards wide, along the right bank of which we rode for at least half a mile to a high embankment of pebbles, where the canal takes a direction bearing south-by-east: the embankments of it are now 250 yards apart, and apparently it was very deep, now cut off and partly filled up by the marsh; its main course from here is north and south. Whether this was the Palæcopus cut by Nebuchadnezzar to bring the waters of the sea to Mugheir I must leave to antiquarians to decide. We now arrived at the sea; a small creek winds among reeds from the Khore Abdullah, and a sail appeared, announcing the presence of the open water, which, they say, is five to six fathoms deep, and that the largest vessel can enter it. I procured a boat and dropped down to the mouth of the creek. The Khore

122 *Country between Maaghil and Quait.*

is called El Grain. There was a buggalo anchored in the creek, as there was a fog over the country; when it cleared we saw Fort Engassen. General direction of the Khore is S.S.E. $\frac{1}{2}$ E.; the banks low, with a few saltwort bushes; pebbles come at a distance of about two miles: a few patches of rocks, formed of a concrete, were scattered along the banks.

CHAPTER III.

THE EUPHRATES VALLEY, AND ACROSS MESOPOTAMIA
TO PERSIA AND INDIA.

HAVING in the previous pages given a detailed description of the countries and modes of communication on those portions of the rivers of Mesopotamia still available for commerce, I must now humbly beg to call attention to other districts watered by the same rivers, where the absence of a strong and settled Government renders life and property unsafe, and in which it is consequently impossible to trade.

Asia presents on its vast continent many regions of great fertility, separated from each other by barriers of uninhabited desert tracts difficult to traverse, which in Central Asia have hitherto presented great obstacles to both the political and commercial intercourse of the human race, and one of these barriers, though only a comparatively small belt, shuts out the great and fertile valley of the Euphrates from the basin of the Mediterranean, and I might say, from all intercourse with the life and civilisation of Europe.

The Desert of Suez has been traversed by canal and rail, and the Russians are making rapid progress

with the latter through the deserts of the Chorasman shore of the Caspian towards Merv and Herat, with the evident intention of making that line the high road to India; and now there remains this one barrier untouched, by which an equally direct line to India might, as time goes on, be secured through Persia to Herat and Candahar, the most paying port of which would be between the Mediterranean, Baghdad, and the cities of Southern and Central Persia.

While nations are vying with each other in enterprising undertakings for the development of the intercourse of mankind, and taking a great interest in the political, engineering, and financial difficulties which each presents, as evinced by committees of Parliament being appointed, and the various projects advocated in the literature of the day, England should make a determined move in this direction, and particularly in developing every route which has the sea at either end as the base of its operations.

To this end one must conclude that Cyprus was secured, and if this narrow strip of desert can be crossed by a rail from Aleppo, and the Euphrates traversed by light steamers, a short and very attractive highway between Western Europe, Persia, and India, will have been opened, satisfying a wish in which all are concerned, the full investigation and exploration of these interesting regions. This comparatively small undertaking could be easily effected and properly protected from the arsenal at Cyprus;

both would be benefited, and this part of the world would resume the position it once occupied as the arena from which Literature, Religion, and Science sent forth impulses, which have ever since actuated the human race. Antioch, Samosat, Harran, Thapsicus, Ur of the Chaldees, Heraglia, Carchemish, and Palmyra's ruined palaces, 'stand to tell a melancholy tale.' These cities would rise again under a powerful protectorate; and even the Arab city of Racca, which under Arab auspices sat for years brooding over the destruction and decayed traces of these great empires, to which the rise of Islam was doomed to give the *coup de grâce*, but all at one time flourished by and in the vicinity of the waters of the Euphrates. The plain to be traversed by the rail is not what is known as the desert; it consists of a fine red clayey soil, which could be cultivated and irrigated by canals from the Euphrates and its tributaries. In the spring of the year it is covered with verdure, in which cress, crocuses, anemones, and all manner of wild flowers, particularly those of the tuberous and bulbous kinds, abound. Heavy rains fall in November and December; after which its surface, from being brown and burnt up, assumes a rich green appearance. It is then that the tribes of Arabia move up, and, like locusts, pasture upon them.

I left Aleppo in the month of October, and rode for two hours over a fine undulating country under cultivation, and in two hours came to Tel

Aran, where I slept in a low, black, Kurdish tent. At 10 a.m. next day I rode over a similar country to Djibool, which is four hours from Aleppo. We had during our ride a salt lake on our right, beyond which was a hilly rising ground. At 2 p.m. we arrived at a mound called Fay, near a little stream, almost dry, where we refreshed ourselves and pitched our tents for the night. The Arabs lit their fires, having accumulated the goods and provisions in a circle round them. The chiefs sat in the centre, while the matchlock-men danced round and round them, and sang their war-song as the night advanced. At 6.30 a.m. we were again in our saddles, and after an hour's march came to Tel Gussaf, seven caravan hours from Aleppo, where we were able to replenish our water-skins and leather bottles from wells close to the mound, which was more like an artificial than a natural hill. The spring rose from a bed of rocks, and by the help of a rope and a leather bucket we raised the water for the horses and camels and again replenished our water-skins. From here the real start across the plain without water and inhabitants is made. There are many very dangerous open wells in the vicinity, some with bad water and some without; and here commenced our journey over the sun-burnt prairie. We left Tel Gussaf at 8 a.m.; the morning was delightfully cool, and the horizon, diversified as the sun rose with a most beautiful mirage, showing trees, castles, and lakes in

rapid succession, out of which, to our astonishment, issued an imposing troop of Arab horsemen, who, came to protect our caravan, but as they had no water-skins, and we had not taken a supply sufficient for them, the conclusion was speedily arrived at that we had better be without them; so they took leave and departed. At about five, before sunset, we came to a place on the plain called Ans, where we pitched our tents in regular order, fearing a surprise. While a small repast was being prepared, I started for a walk on the plain clear of the encampment. Long-necked camels, allowed to browse about freely in search of tufts of the thorn they are so fond of, crossed my path; the sun, about to close the day, rested its broad lurid orb on the golden waves of the western plain. The near desert presented lines of richest brown so peculiar to it, which crossed the landscape, each belt narrowing in perspective until lost in the above sea of gold,—a stage in striking contrast both with the deep, unfathomable blue of the arch above and the neutral purple of the Eastern horizon, passing all human glory or even adequate description.

It was half-past four next morning, when, with tents folded, and camels collected and laden, this small oasis of life seemed again on the move. At 8 a.m. we arrived at the end of the plain: the ground became undulating, and at 9, coming to a depression or beginning of a ravine, we urged our

horses forward and reached a rising ground, which commanded a view of the splendid valley of the Euphrates, which (and here that expression may well be applied) 'makes glad the heart which hails the sight.' We were standing on the verge of a cliff, 140 feet high, and before us, lower down on the opposite edge, rose the ruins and minaret of Jaber Castle, which stand on an elevation of a range of hills that, coming from the north-west, terminate at this castle, whose crags and lofty minarets give a character to the whole of its extensive valley. It is three or four miles from cliff to cliff: the latter are nearly 150 feet above its alluvial plains, which contain waving forests of the tamarisk, and glades verdant with grass and the liquorice plant. Light curls of smoke rising everywhere indicate the course of the river, where the Weldah Arabs have pitched their tents; they are a quiet and peaceable tribe, have flocks and herds of cattle, and cultivate enough for their actual subsistence.

The river at Balis (in $36^{\circ} 1' 2''$ N. L. and $38^{\circ} 7' 10''$ E. L.) is 628 feet above the Mediterranean. It is about 300 yards wide, and this is the nearest point to that sea; the distance, in a straight line, is about 120 miles to the Bay of Antioch, and about fifty from Aleppo, which is north of the direct line to Suediah or Seleucia; the latter place is in $35^{\circ} 56' 0''$ E. L.; so Balis is $2^{\circ} 11' 0''$ east of it. Here the river, for the first time, commences to trend to the eastward.

From Balis to Aleppo is about fifty miles, twenty-five of which, as already shown, are through a rich cultivated country—more so, indeed, than that in the immediate vicinity of that city; and the plain which we have traversed is of a fine, rich, red loam, easily cultivated where the waters of its small streams harboured in the winter, and canals led over it as in former ages. The climate is all that could be desired; Indian corn, wheat, and the finest cotton, could be grown, and, were the means of transport and security assured, it would soon abound with a most industrious population.

I remained on board a steamer from October until the end of March, when, having made arrangements with Sheikh Hadju, of the Anizeh tribe, I proceeded along the valley to Balis, and then crossed again the plain to Aleppo. Much rain had fallen during the winter, and consequently the dry parched plain to Jibbool (near Aleppo) was covered with verdure and flowers, particularly the crocus and anemone. Hadju's tribe was on the route north, enjoying the pasture; and when we found ourselves in their midst everything seemed moving noiselessly along, lines of camels everywhere forming the horizon. With the first rise of the river I returned, and crossed this rich and flowery plain to the east of Palmyra, reaching the river above Dair.

I shall now endeavour to describe the Euphrates from here to Anah, and for that purpose shall divide

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it into three sections, in accordance with its geographical features and the possibility of its navigation by fast steamers of light draft.

The first, between Balis to the range of hills called the Balbi; from the Syrian plains they cross the river in an oblique direction.

The second portion, from them to another range of hills called the Jebel Erzi.

The third, from the Jebel Erzi to Anah.

The first section presents wide and extensive valleys, bounded here and there by chalk cliffs, enclosing extensive lands, which can be irrigated. The river, even at its lowest season, flows through it with very deep water in long reaches, which are terminated by pebbly bars, through which it makes two or three channels, most of them having a depth of water quite enough for the river steamer of the present day: only two of these bars, during the whole winter and low season I remained there, presented any difficulty. The first had a depth of not more than three feet four inches in the deepest part, and is met close to Jaber Castle, and owing to it the river presents a fine, broad, lake-like expanse of water above the castle, and gives it quite a noble appearance, with banks fifteen feet high, covered with forests of tamarisk, of which some were falling into the stream. From this place the water is deep enough everywhere to Aith-deheen, where two very peculiar conical mounds present themselves on the right bank. The country

on the left is open; its undulating land being scarcely above the alluvial plain, and is full of the *débris* of dwellings and sites of ancient temples. The hills which at Jaber cross the Euphrates, and on which stand the low ruins of Abu Hurrerah on the right, become lower and lower as they descend to this point, and, after enclosing a perfect forest, end at this second shallow ford, where the river impinges the Syrian plains, which slope in a verdant valley down to it. These two conical mounds of Aithdeheen evidently served to mark the course of the river to those who travelled in its vicinity. Here it is about a quarter of a mile wide, and flows through many channels over the well-known ford called 'the Anadah' by the Arabs, whose camels, in troops, are constantly crossing it to reach either between the Syrian and Orfah districts, and most frequently on raiding expeditions. In the lowest season there are only two feet eight inches of water in its deepest channel, but, as above stated, this could be easily made navigable by damming the others, when, the current, carrying away the pebbles, would deepen the water in the main stream.

The river now flows through the open plains on the east, extending to Racca, which are covered with ruins found in and near its bed; no difficulty, however, to navigation is encountered. The country is open, rich, and fertile; the waters of the Belik river flow down from Harran and from the hills about Orfah,

and enter the Euphrates below the ruins of Racca, which are on its right bank, and on the left of that of the great river. These plains are even now partly cultivated, and must have been extensively so when Racca was a seat of government, and the favourite resort of the greatest of the Caliphs—Haroon-el-Rashid. Mosques, towers, and walls falling in decay, the ruins of his palace, are still to be seen, and just above them those of a fortress called Heraclia. Solid masonry of hewn stone, clamped with lead and iron, called by the Arabs Resasa ('the Leaden'), and great solid buttresses, called El Hammām ('the Bath'), in the reaches above Heraclia, attest the importance of this district in former ages, and point to the positions where Thapicus, Zeugma, and other cities once stood.

On the right bank of the river, opposite Racca, is an extensive alluvial plain, two or three miles broad, bounded by a straight line of cliffs, called by the Arabs El Kesrah, or 'the Broken.' They are about 500 feet high in some places, and subtend this vast plain to the end of this section.

I feel I ought not to pass on without a further notice of the mounds at Aithdeheen above mentioned. They resemble those at Nimroud, in the vicinity of Mosul; and from the traces of masonry, glass pottery, and *débris*, would become an interesting locality for the archæological explorer, more particularly as they are situated on the well-known ancient line of com-

munication through Hamah and Palmyra, between Egypt and Assyria ; and here, if anywhere, we may look for monuments and inscriptions connecting the rock tablets of Nineveh with the literature of Egypt and Greece.

The whole country between this point on the river and Syria is extremely interesting. There are high lands, which can scarcely be called hills, running right across it, but its plains consist of fine soil, and capable of easy cultivation. Rain falls from November to April there, in great abundance, when these lands are covered with fine pasture ; and if the water were harboured in cisterns, gardens and cultivation could be plentifully irrigated during the dry season ; wells could also be sunk, as water is found at a depth of from twelve to fifteen feet. The distance to Damascus is about 250 miles ; about fifteen miles from here is the celebrated ruin of Resafa, but about half-way, and in a direct line to the capital of Syria, those of Palmyra, once celebrated for its position, the richness of its soil, its fine, clear, bracing air, the sweetness of its waters, and its isolation. Pliny says the city of Palmyra stands between two great empires—the Roman and the Parthian, and its friendship was their first care when hostilities arose.

Our second section, between the Balbi and the Jebel Erzi ranges, begins at a Drackenfelt-like gorge, where the great river flows through the first-named hills ; in it the waters are confined and everywhere

deep, and shortly after entering it a most interesting landscape presents itself; hills 320 feet high on the right gradually slope down to the water's edge, along which are walls and fortifications of hewn stone, which are continued up to their summit, to where stands a fine old castle, the palace of the Arab queen El Zubbah, a contemporary of Khosroes and of the Arab kingdom of Hira. After passing the castle the valley opens, the hills on the right retire from the river, and leave a plain which is covered with tombs and ruins: in them we found a gold mask, now in the British Museum. The hills on the eastern bank enclose a narrow plain, covered with verdure, and among which flowers, the anemone, and wild asparagus, abound. At the end of this plain the river meets, and sweeps under the eastward range again, which is surmounted by the ruins of a castle, called Zelebi, and both this, and the palace above mentioned, are called by the Arabs 'Helebi Zelebi,' who state 'there was a tunnel under the river connecting the fortresses.' After passing this most interesting, castellated, and secluded valley, the haunt of the hoopoo and other bright-plumaged birds, and abounding in partridges and other game, the hills retire on both sides, an extensive valley opens, and well-watered plains meet the eye in every direction, more particularly towards the east. 'The great trench of Semiramis,' here derived its waters, and can be traced across the plains. It irrigated in ancient times the table-land

to the east in the direction of the Khaboor. Arabs now cultivate here to a great extent, and the town of Deir, built on a very large, high, conical hill, containing 3000 inhabitants, seen from afar, dominates all this section of the valley.

A few miles below Deir, the Khaboor river flows down from the mountains of Mardin, which are crossed on the road from Mosul to Diarbekr, and, after irrigating the celebrated plains of Dara and Nisebeen—once great and powerful cities—here mingles its red and muddy waters with the purer stream of the Euphrates.

The Khaboor, if its waters were properly harboured, could be easily navigated by small steamers. One of its tributaries flows from the mountains of the Singar, almost visible from here in the direction of the north-east. The whole of these plains to the east, if secured against Arab inroads, might therefore become a populous and productive kingdom on the banks of the Euphrates, with the town of Kirkeseyah, which occupies the right bank at its confluence, for its capital.

The plains on the right, or western bank, are now fairly cultivated; the inhabitants, under the protection of the town of Deir, are industrious and well to do; and below that town the plains are very extensive. They are bounded on the west by miles of a wall of precipitous cliffs, which the great Syrian prairie presents to the occupiers of the valley below; and along its edge are numerous castellated ruins. The principal

one is that of the castle of Rahabah, supposed to be the Rabbah, 'on the river,' mentioned in the Old Testament, built on a disconnected piece, or small plateau, ajutting from the above cliff, which secures for the castle a natural moat. It is a lofty quadrangular building of graystone, and is a very commanding feature in the general landscape. There are extensive brick buildings outside its walls, evidently of a much later period than that of the castle. On the plain, close to the river, are the two small inhabited villages of Meyadeen, at which place horses can be obtained to visit Rahabah, Suffein—where, perhaps, the great battle between Ali and Maawiah was fought—and the other ruins on the edge of the cliff, which show how this country was protected from the great plain to the west.

To recapitulate: we have in this second section a fine country, possessing the towns of Deir and Kirkeseyah, plains easily cultivated, watered by both the Khaboor and the Euphrates; open certainly to inroads of Arabs from the west, but open, and a short distance from, and in easy communication with, the magnificent country of Nisibeen, by the valley of the Khaboor.

But now, in the section from Salaheyah to Anah, the features of the great river altogether change. The hills of the Jebel Erzi rise on the left bank, from 350 to 400 feet in height, and before reaching them the first rocks in the river-bed are

met, called the Isgeriah, below which the steamer *Tigris* was lost in a storm in 1836. High cliffs on the left bank now present themselves, along which the river sweeps, trending to the eastward. On the right the country is, though more open, scarcely amenable to irrigation. Lofty wheels, supported by a high projecting wall, on which, over arches, runs an aqueduct, lift and pour the water on to the mainland for the irrigation of its gardens, which attest its having been at one time well cultivated and inhabited. As the river flows rapidly here no dams or mill-races in the stream are required, which, as below Anah, exist and obstruct the navigation: the river itself being sufficiently narrow, deep, and rapid, obviates their necessity. The tower of El Ghaim, on the right bank, halfway, marks the limits of the Pashalic of Baghdad. Approaching Anah there are numerous islands, in one of which, just above the Kerablah rocks, the apple, pear, orange, and pomegranate trees, grow luxuriantly, and groves of 'feathery palm-trees' now rise, 'and the date grows ripe;' and, wherever a peaceful cultivator can live, groves of these useful trees extend from here to the shores of the Persian Gulf.

The shelf of rocks called the Kerablah at Rawah, a town on the cliff on the left bank, extends right across the river; it forms in the low season, when its rocks are well out of the water, the limit of the navigation of the Upper Euphrates—that is, its navi-

gation from Bir to Anah. Here cargo has to be discharged and reshipped, and I should propose to leave the steamers and proceed by rail across Mesopotamia to the Valley of the Tigris, with a station about midway on the river Tharthar.

The distance by water from Balis to Helebi is about 130 miles; from Helebi to the Jebel Ezri is 101; from thence to the ledge of rocks at Kerablah is 124, making in all 355 miles, or about 200 in a direct line. It would take thirty hours to descend and fifty to ascend the river by steamer between those two points. Could proper protection and a safe and constant communication with Europe and the Mediterranean be assured by steam navigation, this country would become densely populated, and the 200 miles would in a very short lapse of time be traversed by a railway.

Anah would become a place of the first importance; it has about 2000 inhabitants, and is in the Pashalic of Baghdad, and draws its supplies from that place; its population, and that of Rawah, are Arab, but sturdy cultivators, always well armed to resist small Bedouin attacks. Their boats and fortified islands in the river render them secure from sudden raids.

The plain between Anah and Baghdad, though a desert, is protected on the west by the Euphrates; the centre of it is watered by the river Tharthar, which, rising in the Singar mountains, flows into it

and divides, one stream running west into the Khaboor, and the other east into the Tigris at Tekrit; and on it are found the remains of the Median wall, along which the rail might run to the Valley of the Tigris at Sammarah, where it would be at once in steam communication with India. As population and commerce increased, there is little doubt but that that part of the Euphrates between Anah and Baghdad would be made available for steamers *via* the Suglawayah Canal. The whole route from Baghdad to Anah and Balis, and down the Euphrates to Babylon, and its Chaldean lake and countries abounding with rice and corn of every description, is now open to steam navigation at certain seasons of the year; and attached is a report written by myself from the diary of one of the engineers of my Company, who ascended the Euphrates with Midhat Pasha, which I had printed and attached to my pamphlet, *Across Mesopotamia to India*, which Sir William Andrews, to whom I lent it, has had collated into one of his late publications, showing the present state of the river during the flood season.

But the navigation of the Euphrates between Anah and the entrance to the Suglawayah Canal is very difficult, being so obstructed by artificial dams in connexion with mill-races, in which wheels some twenty feet in diameter, with buckets attached, raise the water. As already described, these dams are constructed right across the stream, and it would be

necessary to blow them up by powder or dynamite in places to create a passage for steamers at all seasons, or turned by a canal where the nature of the ground permitted ; and if some were maintained, and locks constructed, these dams might be made effectual in keeping the water at a higher level : but these are at present the great difficulties, and have prevented the navigation of this most interesting part of the river from time immemorial. During the floods of April, May, and June, steamers of good power can easily pass the rapids formed over them, and the run in the above months, from Baghdad through the Suglawayah to Hit and Anah in a nice steamer, is the most charming trip one can take. This was first effected by the English steamer, *Euphrates*, in July 1838. Hit is the first place reached, situated on the west bank, the hills of the Arabian and Mesopotamian plain close in. They contain the everlasting fountains of bitumen which flow down towards the river. Similar springs are found on the east of the Tigris, N.W. of this, near the lesser Zab. Between this place and Haditha the hills present to the navigator ledges of rocks and caves, which have been inhabited by the Troglodytes of Arabia. There are also open valleys, where the river assumes the appearance of a lake with wooded islands, which are very pretty. I anchored my bitumen boat alongside one of these islets in the month of April, and was charmed by the songs of the nightingales, which abounded in the grove ; they only wanted the bowers of the rose, which would grow

here as luxuriantly as by Bend Ameer's stream. The weather in this clime is all that could be desired.

But now we must leave the dams, mill-races, lofty water-wheels, and the plains on which the celebrated battle of Cunaxa was fought, and where the waters of the Euphrates and Tigris mingle ; where Mesopotamia ceases, and the alluvial districts of Babylonia commence, over which wander, as Abu-el-Feda expresses it, a thousand canals, which are capable of converting them into one great field of industry and cultivation under a powerful lord of the levels ; but without such a controller of its waters they now create only pestilential fens and morasses. This great alluvial plain, over 30,000 square miles, right away to the Persian Gulf, was once covered by cities and towns. The Euphrates now, after discharging one immense body of water into the Tigris, and another into a rapid canal to the westward (into which it might be altogether diverted, as happened when the glory of the Chaldees fell as a prize to the warriors of the North), flows languidly on to the ruins of Babylon. Mesopotamia is ended, the great rivers enclosing it unite, and part to inundate and convert into marshes the once splendid province of Babylonia.*

* The name of Mesopotamia is properly applied to the country north of Baghdad enclosed by the Euphrates and Tigris. These rivers below were confounded by the ancient geographers, sometimes considered as one stream watering Babylonia. Strabo traces the course of the Tigris only to Seleucia.

The distance between the rivers in a direct line, where their main streams nearest approach, is about twenty-five miles. A plain, cut up by the beds and banks of canals, intervenes : here from the Euphrates a small canal runs to Kerbela, about fifteen miles to the westward ; a walled town, sacred to the Persians as the place of martyrdom and tomb of Hussain.

Below this small canal, the large branch of the Euphrates above alluded to, called Hindeyah, leaves its main stream. For some ten miles this outlet is a broad and rapid river, with regular banks, which are well preserved by the Maadan Arabs to command the water for their rice-fields ; it is several feet above the level of the country, which is covered with their tents and reed habitations, and their denizens, of every age and of both sexes, now give the banks a lively, and, in this depopulated country, an interesting appearance. Having stayed a few days with them, I was often amused by stories of these wild but industrious children of the tribe of Maad, whom my Turkish Agha represented as wanting in all the manners and customs of civilised life, without even that modesty of the fair sex which is proverbial among the Arabs.

The extensive lakes and marshes covering the country east of Babylon are formed by the redundant waters of this canal ; they flow to the west towards Kerbela, near which place one can land and walk to

that town : its distance is about a mile from the water. Further down, north-west of the ruins of Babylon, and in the centre of the lake, are extensive ruins, called by the Arabs Hargah, and the bed of a canal, in which were found cuneiform bricks very much effaced. There were also very extensive ruins, called by the Arabs Nahr-Algamy, in which name may be recognised the Narragam of Pliny ; and if so, these ruins are those of the interesting city of the Sippari. Pliny says the city Hipparene, celebrated for the science of the Chaldeans, was, like Babylon, situated on the Narragam, which would point to this exact position. Leaving these ruins, open water is traversed to the west of the ruins of Babylon and its distinguishing hill, the BirsNimroud. For some ten miles a viaduct extends along the eastern shore, south from the Birs, on which is the road to the tomb of the Prophet Ezekiel ; its lofty Saracenic spire is seen afar off, and forming over these watery wastes a most interesting feature : a wall encloses the small citadel and town which have grown up around it. Ezekiel, it is stated, prophesied by the river Chebar, in the land of the Chaldeans. Now in this country, and in Bussorah, 'k' is pronounced 'ch,' and the 'Chebar' would mean 'great,' or the Arab شط الكبير, Shat-el-Chebar, or 'Great River,' an epithet applied to the Euphrates generally. From Ezekiel's tomb the lake can be crossed in a southerly direction to the ruins of Cufah, situated on the low but tertiary shore of

a peninsula of that formation, which is a spur of the great Arabian plain formed by these waters and those of the Bahr-el-Najif to the west, which reaches down to the ruins of Hirah. I call it a peninsula, as it has the Sea of Najif to the west, and this washes its eastern shore ; it is only a few feet above the water, and its grassy, pebbly margin, presents a pleasing contrast to the alluvial and muddy banks on the opposite side towards the plains of Irak. Bitumen boats lay here alongside, which had conveyed passengers and pilgrims so far on their way to Meshed Ali. The direct road from Kerbela to that holy city is over the plain above mentioned, which is above the level of the highest inundation of the Euphrates. From the site of Cufah to Meshed Ali is two short miles. The bed of the ancient Palæcopas Canal of Nebuchadnezzar is crossed, and something like martello towers, built along the road at intervals of about 500 yards, are intended to be a refuge to protect any small band of travellers proceeding on their pilgrimage to Meshed Ali against any sudden raid. These forts, or enclosures for refuge, are continued on the other side of the Bahr-el-Najif, in a south-west direction, along the great Arab Hadj route to the high lands of the Jebel Shammar, which lie halfway on the road to Medina, about 150 miles from the shores of the Bahr-el-Najif. Along this road the Arabs poured down from Central and Western Arabia to conquer Persia, and founded on this spot the celebrated city of

Cufah.* The palaces of Hirah did not suit these great chiefs of the desert, who abhorred settled habitations during their early conquests. The golden dome of the mosque of Meshed Ali, rising over the houses of a small, high-walled town, on the verge of the desert, is seen from here. Standing on the fortifications of the town, a survey can be taken of the vast extent of the Bahr-el-Najif on the west, and the ruins of the palace of Khawarnac, which loom in the distance on its high table-land on the opposite shore. It was the summer resort of the kings of Hirah from the sawad or delta of the Euphrates. There are no extensive ruins at Cufah, nor even at Hirah—not a pillar or stone of its palaces, nor scarce a vestige remains of the well-watered gardens and date-groves which abounded there in the days of the early caliphate at Baghdad.

Small, light steamers, from that city could navigate all these waters, which are full of interest, if the Suglawayeh Canal from Baghdad to the Euphrates were cleaned out and opened to commerce. Mounds of ruins everywhere abound, and in these now watery wastes, when duly explored, will be found, it may be hoped, valuable relics of the schools, the science and learning, of the Chaldeans.

This depression on the west and the low districts

* Cufa, or Kufa, was a great seat of Arab learning, and gave a name to the earliest Arabic character, which is termed to this day the Cufic.

of the Bahr-el-Najif, flooded by the Euphrates, offers a valuable aid in protecting the country from the inroads of the Arabs, particularly if its waters were navigated by steamers. The great sheet of water called the Bahr-i-Najif extends in a south-easterly direction, and emits two considerable streams, called the Shat-el-Kusseif and Shat-el-Atchan, which subsequently unite and are known by the latter name, which, joined by several rivers from the Huran, form what is called the Shat-el-Samawah.

At Baghdad the Euphrates flows east into the Tigris. The Tigris now, down in this latitude, flows west into the Euphrates, and their combined waters form the great marshes; in which, after passing the ruins of Babylon and the marshes of the Lemboom, the Euphrates was formerly, and is now, almost finally lost. Below this the whole country is at times inundated by the waters of both rivers. Formerly the main body of the Tigris entered these western lands, but an arm (now its main stream) found an equal depression toward and along the mountains of Luristan. In the neighbourhood of Ghurnah the whole country, from the confines of Persia to the plains of Arabia at Mugheir, is capable of being converted into a district covered with gardens and cultivation, in which the date, vine, orange, and every description of corn and fruit, would grow in luxurious abundance. It is now a vast pestilential marsh. In the time of Strabo its fertility was renowned, when it was called

Mæcene (*Μακρυν*); applied also to the high plains of fine clay which bordered them on the west—that is, between the deserts of Arabia and the marshes of the Euphrates.

A most interesting excursion can be made from Baghdad in the months of December and January through this region, exploring the country down its centre between the two rivers, and particularly so by one who enjoys a fair knowledge of the Arabic language. No danger need be apprehended as far as the latitude of Hillah. So far you cross a dry plain, cut up by innumerable mounds and banks of canals long since dry, as already alluded to, but below the latitude of Babylon proper, or Semowah, dry marshes, with a wild unruly population, are traversed. When close to, a raised way, which has existed for ages, leads to the vast mound and ruins of Niffer; smaller ones are visible to the east of the line, all attesting to the position of great edifices, whose foundations and *débris* have withstood the floods of the Taurus and the devastating inroads of the Arabs. This doubtless was the land of the Chaldæans, in which the Prophet Job lived; the Western Arabs were the bands of the Beni Saba, or Sabæans, and the Chaldæans the Beni Khaled, for these Chaldæans were Arab settlers, merchants, and navigators. Pliny styles them as the Chaldæans of Gherra—the well-known port of this territory in the Gulf; they are styled also Orcheni and Borsippæans, as inhabitants of these cities. The

Arabs were also astronomers as well as navigators. Isaiah says the Assyrians founded these cities for those that dwell in the wilderness (Arabs). Josephus says that Abraham left Ur of the Chaldæans. South of Niffer the road leads over marshy ground covered with reeds to large and extensive mounds, called Phara, and beyond them to Worka, which lies near the confluence of the Hie and the marshes of the Euphrates, at which place I discovered a piece of sculpture found in these districts (as mentioned in Loftus's travels). These mounds, however, are literally covered with terra cotta remnants of antique figures of every description. Being remote from any town, or indeed settled habitation of any kind, and as their proper exploration would be attended with great danger from the lawlessness of the Arabs in these marshes, they are seldom visited. I travelled with a Dufferey chief, well known in these parts, to Worka ; there crossed the Euphrates to the high upland plains beyond that river to the mounds and ruins at Mugheir, which have been explored by Mr. John George Taylor. These magnificent plains were in January, when I rode over them, covered with verdure, in which the cress and mustard plant abounded.

Extending from the Bahr-el-Najif all along the western limits of the Euphrates, they have been irrigated by an extension of the Palæcopas Canal — now dry. Its bed and banks can be traced

right away to Zobeir and site of Teredon to the inlet of the sea called Khore Abdullah. This plain is healthy and remarkably fertile. The alluvial districts of the Euphrates, and its marshes below, produce corn and rice in abundance. Mugheir was therefore a magnificent position for the control of Arabia; it was here the concourse of Arabs took place before the battle of Cadeseyah, fought on these very plains.

The Arab tribes commence their migration from the slopes of the Jebel Shammar early in November, and work north. They form an immense horde; the whole country appears for the moment alive with their flocks and camels, eating up the pastures as they move along. Before the heat of summer they reach the vicinity of Syria and the higher lands bordering on the Upper Euphrates, which are perfectly green to the end of April. They purchase their supplies of rice, dates, wheat, and Indian corn in this district; and at Anah, Hillah, and Kerbela, and all along the rivers and the countries as far as Palmyra, the plains abound in wells, and have capital soil, but now produce little, owing to their exactions and the want of a settled government.

To keep the Arabs in order and establish a settled Government in this part of Arabia, it would be necessary to have military establishments in such places as Zobeir, Mugheir, and Semawah; and as the result of this cordon a proper understanding with the

tribes in the vicinity, blood exacted according to Arab law and tribal responsibility, would make this country fertile 'and blossom abundantly;' a fine climate for seven months of the year would be enjoyed, when one could revel on the green flowery plains around, the air being exceedingly salubrious off the dry lands of Arabia. During the summer months the heat could be made tolerable for Europeans with proper protection; even now it is more conducive to health to spend the summer months at Zobeir instead of Bussoreh, where the night air is damp and malarious. The canal, whose banks are still traceable, joining these dépôts, should be again opened; and were this effected these dépôts would become cities as of old, and the whole country, from Baghdad to the sea, would be perfectly safe from Arab inroads.

Mugheir stands in the centre of this country, and is a very lofty and extensive ruin. Artificial mounds rise round it in every direction; it is about an hour's journey from the lowlands of the Euphrates, north-west of Suk-i-Shuhk, and about ten miles from that place, which is now the principal seat of the Arab Government of the Sheikh of the Montifik: the country round Suk-i-Shuhk for miles is black and muddy, as it is not, like Mugheir, above the inundations of the river.

But to return to the country of Mæcene (*Μακηννη*, or *Μαίχνη*), south of Suk-el-Shukh, the products of

which country are excellent ; to the east is a district of rivers, lakes, and islands, with characteristics very different from the marshes and flooded country, already alluded to, having been from time immemorial a vast series of lakes formed by the surplus waters of the Euphrates, and numberless streams from the Tigris. Both rivers have innumerable outlets, forming lakes and marshes without any control but the main stream of the Tigris, scarcely broad enough for a steamer to turn round in it, being narrow, is very deep, and navigable throughout, whereas the Euphrates outlet is less definite and exceeding shallow. The Arabs who inhabit these regions are almost independent, with habits and modes of living peculiarly their own. They are called the Ghuzzaal, and their chief, the Ameer-el-Gezair, or Lord of the Isles, with whom, leaving Suk-el-Shukh in a well-appointed canoe, with two lads to paddle us along, I visited their wild haunts. We in some places glided through maze-like courses, bounded by thick-growing lofty reeds ; in others, across open water surrounded by forests of them. In order to give me a little surprise, on approaching a large settlement or haunt of its inhabitants my conductor uttered a cry, more like that of a jackal than a man, which was answered by the immediate appearance of hundreds of armed mashoofs (canoes), and our being immediately surrounded by them. Hundreds of light bamboos waved

in the air, and the young people who handled them were not encumbered with much clothing; some wore a light, dirty white shirt, which was caught up under a girdle of tanned hide round the waist. Two men seated in the centre were armed with lances, swords, and matchlocks. The lads were located in the extreme ends; and stood or sat as they paddled or poled, in accordance with the depth of water. We soon came to what was apparently dry land, on which was an extensive cultivation of all kinds of Oriental vegetables, together with onions, cucumbers, and beans. Women and girls in blue frocks, rather æsthetically worn, sat in groups. I was told by the Sheikh as we landed, that we were on a floating island formed by laying down reeds, over which they pile clay to a great depth: as the reeds rot in the waters below the mass above floats; some take root, grow, and get matted together, which binds the mass: all of which, I suppose, like the Bog of Allen in Ireland, floats, and under the influence of heavy winds or fresh inundations changes its position. And I understood the smaller ones can be shifted by poles from the shoal, where they may be arrested, into deep water, when they float away altogether as a different district is found convenient. This makes them independent of any sudden rise of water from the floods above. These floating gardens are noticed by Strabo, speaking of these very lakes: ἡ δ' ἄμπελος ἐν ἔλεσι φύεται χαλαμίνας

ρίζην ἐπιβαλλομένης γῆς ὅση δέξαιτ' ἂν τὸ φυτὸν ὥστε ἐκφόρητον γένεσθαι πολλάκις εἴτα κόντοις ἀπωθεῖσθαι πάλιν εἰς τὴν οἰκεῖαν ἔδραν.—‘Here the vine is grown in the marshes by heaping earth on rafts of reeds, which are frequently carried away by the water, and again impelled back by means of poles into their proper position.’

I remained two days in these marshes with this Sheikh, and then proceeded to the south, when we entered one channel, the deepest of many, in which we found only two feet of water. This terminated in a wide, main river, which flows between date-groves and forms the Shat-el-Amarah at Ghurnah. Light steamers could always traverse these marshes, and a few light torpedo-boats would keep its tribes in perfect subjection to the central government.

The Tigris has, however, been the channel of navigation by which commerce found its way to the emporiums of this most interesting part of the globe. History states that Nearchus could not find a passage to Babylon by the Euphrates;* Strabo states that ships and boats conveyed the commerce of the East to Opis† and Seleucia; and under the early Arab ruler of Islam the Tigris is spoken of (as shown in the translated extracts attached) as the river of commerce right down to the Gulf, joined by a branch of

* Nearchus, descending the Karun, passed with his fleet into the Tigris, and he called the Shat-el-Arab the Tigris.

† This places Opis south of Seleucia.

the Euphrates, which is sometimes termed the Euphrates itself, as shown hereafter by both Roman and Arab writers.

Pliny speaks particularly of the navigation of the Upper Euphrates, which evidently was open and availed of in his days. He says, speaking of the great routes and towns in Arabia and Syria, as Petra, Damascus, and Emesa, which is on the Orontes, 'that after Sura,* but close to it, is Philiscum, a town of the Parthians on the Euphrates: from it there is a ten-days' navigation to Seleucia, and almost as many to Babylon. Near the town of Massice, 594,000 paces from Zeugma, the Euphrates divides; the portion on the left enters Mesopotamia, even to Seleucia, having poured its waters into the Tigris, which flows near it.' As he speaks of the navigation to Seleucia, we may conclude that at that time commerce followed that route. Jawhari, the Arab lexicographer, calls the two rivers the فراتان, or the Dual Euphrates. In the following pages is an account of the same portion of the two rivers given by Abu-el-Feda, an Arab geographer of the fifteenth century, which cannot be devoid of interest.

* Abu-el-Feda speaks of the Sura division of the Euphrates.

*Extracts from the Geography of Abu-el-Feda,
who lived at Hannah in the 15th
century ; died 730 A.H.*

THE Euphrates, after passing هيت (Hit), reaches الكوفة (Cufa).^{*} And a number of rivers fall into the Euphrates, and are derived from it. Of those that fall into the river below سماساط (Samasat) are, first, the river البليخ (Belikh) from Haran; then the river الخابور (Khaboor); then the الهرماس (Hermas), which latter river rises above Nisibeen, and after flowing through that country it forms two branches; one, the ثاثار (Thathar), flows to الهضر (Hadr) and to the desert of Sinjar, and falls into the Digleh at Tekrit; the river itself (the other branch) falls into the Khaboor† above Karkeseyah (قرقسيا), and it and the Khaboor form one river, which falls into the Euphrates.

And there are derived‡ (يحمل) from the Euphrates several rivers. The river عيسى (Esa), in latitude 78°, longitude 32°, leaves the Euphrates opposite

* He here leaves off describing its general course.

† This proves that the plains of Nisibeen is the water-shed, from which water flows to either valley of the Euphrates or Tigris.

‡ Or carried.

الكوفه (Cufah), at a place called دها (Dahama), and they say its commencement is west of Anbar, below the bridge of Dahama, and flows to Baghdad. On reaching المحول (Mahawil), several rivers flow from it, and it finally flows into the Tigris (دجله) below Baghdad.

The Sursur falls into the Tigris between Baghdad and Modain, waters the Suad-el-Irak, and flows to Sursur.

The Malcha runs off below the Sursur, waters the Suad-el-Irak, and falls into the Tigris below Modain.

The Kutha runs off below the Malcha and waters the Suad-el-Irak, and falls into the Dijleh below the fall of the Malcha, (نهره لكه).*

When the Euphrates passes the entrance of the river Kutha, about seven farsacks, it divides into two divisions. One of them runs south to Cufah, flows by it, and falls into marshes. The other and largest, and the most distinguished (بازا), flows by the Castle of Ibn Habeerah, in lat. $70\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$, long. $32^{\circ} 45'$. This great and well-known division is known by the name of the river سورا (Sura). It passes the castle Ibn Habeerah, whence it flows south to the city Babel the Ancient, in lat. 70° , long. $32^{\circ} 25'$, and there leaves the said river سورا (Sura). After it passes Babel a number of rivers,

* The four canals derived from Euphrates are the Esa, the Sursur, the Malcha, and the Kuthah. See 2 Kings, xvii. 24: 'Men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim ;' or Sipphara of Ptolemy.

and the *سورا* river itself, flow to the city of Neel, and after passing Neel it is called *صراه* (Dzurah); then passing Neel it falls into the Tigris; and Sura has the vowel dhumma, and the *s* without points, and an alef at the end. It is a town on that canal, and the river is called after it.

*The Tigris, from the Geography of
Abu-el-Feda.*

IT flows from Roum to Amid and Hasan Keifa, Jezirah ibn Omar, Mosül, Tekrit, Baghdad, Wasit, to Busrah, and falls into the Persian Gulf. He then gives the latitude and longitude of the various places and its general direction until it reaches Baghdad, when he says it flows south to *كلوانه* (Kelwatha), then to Modain, whence its flow is to Dair Acula, *دير العاقول*; then it flows east to *النعامنيا* (Naamaneyah), then east and south to the mouth of *صلح* (Sulah), then flows south to *واسط* (Wasit), and, leaving the marshes between easting and southing, passes near Bussoreh the mouth of the Abeleh (*الابله*), then goes to Abadan (*عبادان*) and falls into the Bahr-el-Faris (the Persian Gulf).

The Nahriwan flows into the Dijleh below *جرجرايا* (Gurgeraya).

Below the marshes, after Wasit, several rivers flow east and west. Those to the west are said to be over

100,000 in number. Near Busrah the tide reaches the Abelah and the (Nahr) river (المعقل) Maaghil, and the ships from India go up from عبادان on the Tigris to Abelah, and up the Abelah Canal to Bussoreh; then they are in the Maaghil (المعقل) Canal, and pass through it to the Tigris. When the tide flows the Nahr Maaghil flows into the Abelah and mingles together, and the river Maaghil with the river Abelah form a circle with the Tigris, and the island formed by them is full of gardens and cultivation (السادس)*. I am (he says) informed that the Bussoreh on these canals is in ruins, and of the 24 kirat (تيراط)† scarcely one remains.

The Arabic author, Ali ibn Ahmed ibn Omar, gives in his *Alag-el-Nufeesah* the following route from Baghdad to Wasuturillen in the year of the Hegirah 652 :—

From Baghdad the road takes you to Kalwathah, three farsacks, situated on the Tigris, thence to Zaafraniah, and through date-groves and cultivation to Maasker and the plains of Melsa, when two canals are crossed over bridges on the way to Mudain. On the east is the Palace of Chosroes, the well-known Iwan, and on the west the Fire Temple. The expenditure on the Iwan was greater than the whole revenue of Persia. From Mudain the road leads to

* He writes after cultivation the word Sadis (السادس), the sixth.

† Used, perhaps, to express proportion.

the Ghubbab Humeyed, where there is a bridge over the Tigris. On the west is a place called Thuberistan; from it you pass to Sheeb beni Kuma, and to a river called Bazaar-el-Road, which falls into the Tigris: this river is crossed in boats to Sheeb beni Kuma. The battle of Saffer with the Khuleefah occurred at this place. From it the road proceeds to Dair-el-Aghul, then to the village Sayarah, and on to Naamaneyah, situated on the west of the Tigris: in this place are large mosques and bazaars, in which are exposed for sale carpets from Hirah, and it is under the government of Hirah. From it the road leads to Gurgereyah, a large city with a cathedral, mosque, and bazaars; it is under the government of Mudain, being east of the Tigris. The next stage is to Wasit, on two branches of the Tigris; two canals from Soura (the Euphrates) water its district.

NOTE.—According to these accounts the Shat-el-Arab is nowhere recognised by Arab geographers. For Abu-el-Feda makes the Tigris the river of commerce to the sea. The Mahomedan lexicographer, Jawhari, who lived in Mesopotamia, says in his *ساح الله* Sihah, on the word Frath, writes Frathan, the double Euphrates, meaning both rivers from their junction to the sea.

PART II.

NAVIGATION OF THE EUPHRATES
AND TIGRIS,

*And an Account of Personal Travels and the
Political Rights of England thereon.*

CHAPTER I.

NAVIGATION OF THE EUPHRATES AND TIGRIS.

ENGLAND, of all European powers, has all along hitherto taken and held the lead in the commercial and political interests of the Persian Gulf and the valley of the Euphrates. Ormus, built in the year 1312 by Ameer Baha ood Deen, was taken from the Ameer's successors in 1507 by Albuquerque, but was afterwards taken by the English and Persians in 1622 from the Dutch and Arab Ameers,* and handed over to England by Shah Abbas ; and by the treaty with that Emperor not only was Ormus conceded, but the English were exempt from paying duty on imports and exports at Gombroon,† on the mainland.

The acquisition of India, as the result of centuries of warfare both by sea and land, led to the surveys of both the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, but hitherto very imperfectly known, and infested by pirates of almost every nation. The Arabs were most feared in the Persian Gulf, whilst the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the English, lost no opportunity of seizing and plundering each other, and lay in wait for that pur-

* See Thomas Herbert's Travels.

† The Persians took Gombroon in 1622.

pose off the entrance of the Persian Gulf and the seas of Aden, Oman, and Ormus. It remained for the English, having swept all piracy and opposition to their sway off these seas, to institute inquiries as to the political relations of the various tribes in the Persian Gulf. They made treaties with them, and empirically surveyed the coasts and the country along the great rivers of Mesopotamia, even to the Mediterranean,* so that for many years the British flag floated supreme on all vessels navigating these waters. They established a regular system of pilotage by Arabs, under British control, to take ships up the estuaries of these rivers.

Under the auspices of Great Britain the navigation of the Euphrates and Tigris, and a trigonometrical survey of Mesopotamia, were, at great expense, undertaken early in this century, and a route across this country to the Persian Gulf claimed the serious attention of the King, the Parliament, and the great Company who held the government of India.

In 1828, Colonel Taylor, when appointed to the Residency at Baghdad, ascended the river in an English-built vessel, flying the British flag the whole way, and ever since then the Resident at that place has had a vessel at his disposal.

The Turkish Government having little or no authority in these regions, British merchants were

* Colonel Chesney proceeded down and mapped the Euphrates long previous to his expedition in 1835 and 1836.

obliged to protect their own vessels, which regularly plied between Bussoreh and Baghdad, flying the British flag.

Situated on a creek, dry at low tide, Bussoreh was in those days a ruined village, two miles from the river; the Turks had a temporary reed-hut at its entrance as a protection for the Custom-house officers, who boarded all boats proceeding up to Bussoreh. The English Resident there possessed the only station on the river, at Maaghil, three miles above that place, already noticed.

The whole of the opposite shore was claimed by Persia; and both banks, nearly half way to Baghdad, were occupied, as detailed in previous pages of this book, by independent tribes, through whom all right of way had to be obtained, either by paying blackmail or by fighting. Boats proceeding under the protection of these Sheikhs had to go in fleets of twenty to thirty, and had to take each fifteen Arab matchlock men for protection, as already described. They had nothing to do with the Turkish Government, and fought their way without their assistance, and independent of them, against any riverside, turbulent Sheikh. The Turkish Government had no garrisons or posts below Baghdad, which was the emporium for which the whole of the commerce from the Gulf was destined. In the Harleian Collection of Voyages the Bishop of Armagh says, in 1597, the Grand Signor is Master of Bussoreh, yet the Turks themselves have no ships or commerce, not so much as one ship on that side.

The limits of the Persian Empire on the left bank were undefined, and the right for all vessels to navigate, whatsoever flag, was consequently inherent in their intrinsic power to do so, and by prescription has been held ever since, and officially recognised by the Turkish authorities on several occasions, as they became through English influence the dominant power.

The presence of Col. Chesney was now commanded at St. James's, when King William IV. expressed a desire that the route by the Euphrates to India should be put to the test ; more particularly, as his Majesty observed, on account of the manifest advantage to commerce which it presented, involving little more than one half of the length of sea voyage compared with that of the route by the Red Sea.

This led to the question being discussed by a Committee of the House of Commons in 1834, and a vote of that House was passed for the survey of the Euphrates, and a grant of 20,000*l.* for that purpose.

Two small, flat-bottomed, iron vessels, were constructed by Messrs. Laird and Co. of Liverpool, one called the *Euphrates*, 103 feet long, 19 feet beam, and 50-horse power ; the other the *Tigris*, 70 feet long 16 feet beam, and 20-horse power ; and the command of the expedition entrusted to Col. Chesney, who immediately secured Capt. H. B. Lynch, of the Indian Navy, as second in command, so that a military and a naval officer should be entrusted with all the arrangements ; and from the interest taken in the expedition by the King and the Indian authorities nothing ex-

traneous appeared wanting to secure the most interesting result; and the King added, addressing the Commander, 'Remember, Sir, that the success of England mainly depends on *Commerce*. I do not desire war, but if you are molested due support shall not be wanting.'

A Firman and letters from the Sublime Porte were issued in 1834; they had reference to the unruly tribes on the Euphrates, that the local authorities should assist, where possible, rather than to the rights of navigation. The *Tigris* was lost in 1836, and other steamers, three in number, were built under the guidance and command of Capt. H. B. Lynch, when the writer joined the expedition and assisted in the surveys of the Euphrates from the Mediterranean to Baghdad, which were carried on under that officer from 1838 to 1842.

As stated above, British sailing-vessels and cargo-boats owned by other British subjects and myself, and carrying the British flag, navigated the waters of the Euphrates and Tigris up to Baghdad. These had always been exempt from dues; the Turk exacted heavy sums, as also did the Arab sheikhs, on those belonging to their own subjects. And now commenced a long official correspondence on the subject. The former were, to give native industry a chance, in the year 1846 put upon the same footing with respect to dues as native vessels; but it is important to bear in mind that the right of navigation

was not questioned, or that of carrying their own flag. We represented that these heavy dues were really another indirect duty on the goods they contained, as there was no intermediate traffic, Baghdad being virtually a port for the destination of all goods up the Euphrates, and the emporium of this part of Asia. The 'Great Elchee' saw the justice of my remarks, backed up by Sir H. Rawlinson, and the dues were altogether taken away, and even the Arab exactions hitherto tolerated by Turkey.

I returned to London in 1857, and hearing the Indian Navy was to be abolished, and their English steamers, one of which still continued to carry on a very casual postal service on these rivers, I placed myself in communication with Sir H. Layard, a statesman of the most liberal and enlightened views, who was then Her Majesty's Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and through his enlightened assistance obtained the sanction of the Foreign Office, as noticed in the following extract from the *Times* of that day, to place steamers on the line; in which I was fully supported by Colonel Chesney and my brothers, without whose assistance my efforts would have been of little avail.

Extract from the Money Article of the 'Times,' July 1st, 1861, regarding the Euphrates Valley:—

'A few years back great efforts were made to induce the Government to assist the development of the Euphrates

route to India, both for telegraphic and general purposes. Accordingly, from time to time the question revives, and it now appears that a practical step of great importance has been taken by private capitalists. A Company has been formed, the shares of which have not been put upon the market, but subscribed by the individual promoters, for the navigation of the Euphrates for purely commercial objects. Mr. T. K. Lynch, of the firm of Lynch Brothers, of Baghdad, who accompanied Captain Lynch during his trigonometrical survey, has obtained a formal recognition of his scheme by the Ottoman Government.'

The Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company was formed with the full authority of the British Government, after communication with the Porte, and the receipt of the Vizirial letter of 1861, authorising them to navigate the Tigris to Baghdad, and remain there; and from that time they have enjoyed unquestioned the rights of navigation between Bussoreh and Baghdad, and have been and now are subsidised by H. M. Indian Government for carrying the mails between those two cities.

During these twenty-two years frequent communications have passed between the British and Turkish Governments regarding boats and steamers, and from time to time, as the latter have been lost or become unfit for the work, others have been sent out, put together at Bussoreh, and have taken up the work on the river, with the full knowledge and concurrence of the Turkish Government; also during this period land has been purchased and dépôts

formed and placed at convenient points on the river, and a complete organization for working the navigation for mail, cargo, and passenger services, has been established; and it is indisputable that this organization has been of the greatest possible service to the commerce of the country and its civilisation; British and Indian trade with the most interesting part of Asia has been vastly extended, and means of communication afforded to the large numbers of Indian subjects to visit Baghdad and the shrines of Kerbela and Kathemain.

But now the Great Elchee had passed away, and the Crimean war was a thing of the past. During the French and German war Russia tore up the treaty regarding the Black Sea, which has now become a Russian lake. The Turks obtained from us large loans, but expended them for purposes other than the development of their empire. Our relations consequently have become strained, and when neither money nor assistance would be rendered them, the Sultan saw Europeans pressing on in all directions, and instead of heading the movement intelligently for the development of the country, he has indolently allowed incompetent pashas to devour its resources and fanaticism and debauchery to incapacitate his people and ignore the talents which alone were required to place the Turkish Empire at the head of the nations.

The Anglo-Turkish Convention was the result of

the great defeats inflicted in the last war by Russia on Turkey, whose foes England, perhaps for the last time, warned off. It was consequently embraced as the last hope of trampled Islam. When, however, the plague was stayed Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and, owing to the Gladstonian diatribes, England was placed in the same category as the other nations of the Ghiaour.

Though Cyprus was retained the Convention became a dead letter. The English officials in Turkey were shelved, and left at Constantinople and other parts of Turkey without employment. Wherever it was possible they were discharged, or left their posts for more active employment in Egypt; and, what was a new feature in Turkey, English enterprise was restricted, obstructed, and put a stop to, wherever it was possible; and to Europeans in general, and Englishmen in particular, nothing was to be conceded.

This hostility was certain to fall with greater force on the nation foremost in mercantile enterprise; and the free navigation of the great routes by the rivers of Mesopotamia, which were rendered safe by British influence and power, were to feel the worst effects of Turkish rule. These rivers are now to be regarded by them, for the first time, as internal waters, to afford on the face of it a fair plea for inimical action; and the navigation by English barges to be arbitrarily stopped, although it inflicted a great injury on the commerce of Turkey itself.

CHAPTER II.

A VISIT TO CONSTANTINOPLE,

*For the purpose of the Removal of Obstructions placed by
the Turkish Government on the Navigation
of the Euphrates and Tigris.*

THE efforts made to meet the exigencies of the great development of the trade caused by our steamers on the rivers of Mesopotamia resulted in our placing several steel barges upon them.

Two very potent causes forced our action in this matter—the low state of the rivers in the summer season, and the obstructiveness of the Sultan's Government preventing an increase of the number of steamers; but even this small resource was met by their opposition, and led to the whole question of our rights to navigate these waters being made the subject of a political discussion between the two Governments.

As stated in the last chapter, English enterprise and the influence of the Great Elchee resulted in our being able to replace our boats by steamers on these waters, which caused the commerce of Bussoreh and Baghdad to make vast strides, keeping pace, by the facilities they afforded, with the requirements of the age.

In furtherance of the advantages thus secured, it occurred to us that steel barges would materially assist the navigation of our steamers; and having had, as stated above, from time immemorial, wooden cargo-boats, we came to the conclusion, after full consideration, that there could be, politically speaking, no necessity for applying for a permission to supplant them with steel ones. Accordingly we sent them out, and, under the circumstances related above, they enabled us to fully meet the demands of commerce on those waters, so that ships, and English merchandise from Europe and India, were no longer detained at Bussoreh, but were forwarded direct from steamer to steamer to its destination at Baghdad. The Turkish Government, however, unfortunately, took it into their heads that this long-authorized traffic should cease, and the barges were prevented from working in the most arbitrary manner, after running for several months. A year had scarcely elapsed when a famine broke out at Baghdad; the river was low, and without the barges no adequate tonnage was available to fetch food, of which there was abundance at Bussoreh, when the dying cry of the inhabitants and the indignant representations of Ambassadors and Ministers caused the obnoxious prohibition to be temporarily relaxed, and the barges were set to work, and proved wonderfully efficacious in saving Baghdad from its worst effects. I was therefore induced to proceed to Constantinople,

to represent matters in their proper light to have the veto altogether removed.

On starting from England I had the assurance of the Foreign Office that, in addition to the prescriptive we had the incidental right, conveyed by the right of navigation, and that Lord Dufferin was instructed in this sense. And really, taking all the circumstances into consideration, we thought that by a little persuasion, and with his Lordship's assistance, the obstruction could be easily removed; that our barges and steamers, without let or hindrance, would soon be performing good work; and that the line of steam navigation from London and Bombay to Baghdad would be complete.

On reaching Constantinople, 10th September, 1881, and finding Lord Dufferin was at his summer residence on the Bosphorus, I addressed his Lordship, announcing my arrival, and forwarded the despatch from the Foreign Office. Next morning I had the honour to receive a telegram inviting me to Therapia that evening. The despatch of this telegram was an exceedingly kind act on the part of his Excellency, although, as it turned out, I should have been in better time had I waited a letter of invitation couched in the same terms, which reached my hotel after I had left. For after two hours' drive I reached Therapia at 3 p.m., and after waiting some time in the antechamber a Mr. Kennedy (Lord Dufferin's private secretary) appeared, and

represented that his Lordship would be very busy with the post until 5 p.m; that after it had gone there was a garden-party, to which the telegram above mentioned invited me, and he hoped in the meantime I could amuse myself there until he was at liberty, when he would be glad to see me. But nobody had arrived save a Turk in military uniform, who seemed as desolate as myself. Two ladies, in close conversation, paced up and down the walk which overlooks the waters of the Bosphorus; servants constantly traversed the garden with wine-hampers and the necessary preparations for the entertainment. During the interval Mr. Kennedy crossed the garden, and gave me a quarter of an hour of his valuable time. I referred to my former visit to Sir Stratford Canning ('the Great Elchee') on this very spot, when business called him away, so I was left as deserted as before, to amuse myself as best I could. At five, some company arrived. Armenian and Greek ladies crossed the lawn—none pretty, but well dressed, with that air of self-possession without much grace peculiar to that class of Orientals. Lady Dufferin appeared, and very affably addressed herself to them, when I had the honour of being presented. After some minutes Lord Dufferin entered, and, after shaking hands with several people, soon singled me out. With an affability and grace peculiar to himself, he recognised having made my acquaintance as a member of a literary club in London, of which he was president previous

to his going to Constantinople. My disappointment that he had not given me a formal opportunity of discussing in his bureau the affairs on which I had come was very great; when again addressing me, and moving a few paces on one side, he said, 'Your affair, you know, I have had some time on hand. It is progressing favourably, and will be shortly settled. I have taken it up very warmly since my arrival, and now it is in a fair way of being brought to a conclusion—even before the Armenian Question—and you may leave it to me.' All this was, of course, said so quickly and hurriedly, that I felt bound, under the circumstances, not to continue or discuss the subject; so, thanking his Lordship most sincerely, he passed on, after having introduced me to a Pasha from Egypt, who, he said, spoke Arabic, saying, 'I hope you will entertain him.'

A line of Armenian priests, consequential-looking fellows, now arrived, and took seats prepared for them on the lawn in a semicircle, with whom his Lordship entered into a long conference. While he was doing so, Mohsin Khan, the Persian Ambassador, an old acquaintance, arrived; not expecting to find me in the Gardens of Therapia, he was, as Lord Dufferin had remarked, very glad to see me, and I him. Now Mohsin, having embraced, in his kind and impressive manner, his Khan Sahib, uttered no end of compliments, and inquired about my journey, and what induced me to come to Con-

stantinople, in true Persian style. He asked why I had not made his khana mine for the occasion. He introduced me to several of his Asiatic friends, which made it very agreeable. My own countrymen held apart in groups, keeping themselves to themselves, English like : so I whiled away the time talking Persian or Arabic to the Orientals. Mr. Jew, the English postmaster, to whom I had introduced myself at Constantinople, did all he could to make the evening pass agreeably ; from whom, having obtained much useful information, I left the garden and sought my carriage, and was soon ascending the steep gorge of Therapia to the table-land above, on my way to my hotel. I then received his Lordship's kind letter of invitation alluded to above, in which he stated, 'Perhaps it may be difficult for me to talk much business ; but I am in hopes that your affair is at last in a way of settlement.'

Though obliged to rest contented with the assurances of Lord Dufferin, I could not suppress the feeling that if his Lordship had made an appointment with me to meet him, and to go with him to the Prime Minister, when we could, independent of any dragoman, discuss the matter, and see how it stood, I should have been more fully satisfied. But this was not to be, and while Lord Dufferin was deceived by the Minister, as events turned out, I was not in the meantime to interfere, and, as regards the affair, kept at an official distance.

I waited for nearly a week, disgusted at being able to do nothing regarding the matter on hand. In the meantime the Persian Ambassador sent his steam-launch—a most gratifying mark of his attention—and his secretary, Mirza Juad Khan, a most intelligent, kind-hearted young nobleman, with whom I proceeded to the mouth of the tunnel of a railway close by. ‘We have an underground railway even here, thanks to an Englishman!’ he significantly remarked, as he forestalled me with his piasters for our tickets. The incline in the train was steep, but in a few minutes we descended from the heights of narrow and crowded Pera to the streets of wretched Galata, with as motley and filthy a population as one can well imagine. One or two wretched carriages, almost occupying its whole breadth, jolted over rocks, for it could scarcely be called a road, and made their way, by shouting and shoving, to the bridge. We were soon on the shore of this splendid inlet, covered with caiques and steamers, and embarking in the steam-launch we crossed the Horn to pick up his Excellency on the other (Stamboul) side of the bridge, after which we were soon cutting along over the dark-blue breezy waters of the Bosphorus. After a short discussion on our old associations in London he pointed out, as we rounded each aerial promontory, and its various palaces and noble mansions, which rose out of its tideless waters, how they were now all falling down, evidencing, by broken walls and sapped foundations, one universal

decay. Twenty-five years had elapsed since I was last on these waters, and even that short period had worked an enormous change. Some fine frigates of various nationalities then manœuvred before her palaces. Constantinople is going down in the world. An extensive commerce which then existed now passes along her classic waters, but abides not. Civilisation finds no rest for the soles of her feet on the dead level of Islam. No sympathy with Progress here exists, but all its instincts are traversed and opposed. Without social institutions and social attractions these lovely shores are becoming gradually deserted, and her fragile palaces will soon fall with her into the Bosphorus. The valour of the Eagle and the spirit of Islam were once united, but now they are 'wreathed in mortal combat;' their strategic position in war will, however, always give importance to these historic straits.

Such were the topics as we passed the palaces of the Dolma Backcha, the Yemerighan, and the castles of Room Kalah and Anatole, where these promontories of Europe and Asia most nearly approach each other; above which we came to the little palace of his Excellency, which was extremely comfortable, and from a little palatial kiosk in its garden above a lovely view of the northern reaches of the Bosphorus was obtained, almost as far as the Black Sea.

I dined and slept at his little palace at Yeni Koi on the Bosphorus. My hopes having somehow ran

high, and forgetting Asiatic obstructiveness when undebauched by bribery, it occurred to me that if the barge question was settled, which I looked upon now as fairly on its way, and the perfect navigation of the Euphrates happily secured, we might get Mohsin Khan to open also the navigation of the Karun. I thought, however, as Lord Dufferin and his Excellency appeared great friends, that I should first consult the former: so I wrote, on my return home, a private note to his Lordship, setting forth that something might be done of enormous benefit to English commerce if we brought our influence and friendship to bear on the Persian Ambassador, to secure the great advantages, both politically and commercially, of such a concession; which only resulted in a reply that he could see no reason why I should not address Mohsin in any way I might desire. So I was coldly left to act as my own discretion dictated. In the meantime I resolved to make the acquaintance of several people interested in Turkish affairs, keeping Lord Dufferin's action entirely to myself.

On my return next day, I had scarcely seated myself in my little *salon* in Misserie's Hotel when a gentleman was announced, who introduced himself as a son of a certain Salah Daniel, whom I had often employed at Baghdad. The name, of course, indicated the race to which my visitor belonged; but I could see in him what an advance the present generation had made in manner, address, and personal

appearance. He spoke French and Turkish besides Arabic, in which language we conversed. I was not averse to make the acquaintance of such a person, for I knew he was at home in Constantinople, and was intimately acquainted with our operations on the rivers and at Baghdad, and might consequently be made useful. I questioned him, consequently, on the public character of every official in the place; for these people have a wonderful facility in acquiring such private information. He pointed out that he had heard of my arrival, and came to offer his services. I was desirous at that moment of making acquaintance with some young, influential Turk, with whom I might visit with some degree of intimacy the influential people at the Porte; for, I regret to say, even in England, if you are patronised by some person with a handle to his name you will, perhaps, receive attention and consideration, but without it not even politeness. You will receive only that cold 'Keep-off!' look which means, 'What have you got to say? Say it, and be off!' But if you are in the received circle you will experience a very agreeable ventilation of the matter in hand. So I endeavoured to secure some young influential Bey for the purpose, and had heard of Hamdy Bey, the nephew of Nedeem Pasha, the Turkish Minister at Vienna. He had at present charge of the Museum at Constantinople, so I sent the Jewish gentleman to see the Bey and arrange for an interview next day.

I had just thrown open the sashes of the windows of my little *salon*, which commanded a most lovely view of Scutari, the Seraglio Point, and the harbour of Galata just below, when he, as arranged on the previous day, was announced. To say, 'It is a lovely morning,' is almost a platitude in these regions; so, after the usual inquiries and salaams, we prepared for our visit to Hamdy Bey, which he said he had arranged at the Museum at five o'clock—equal to about eleven of our time.

One of the perplexities of a sojourn at Constantinople is the impossibility of ascertaining the right time. The Moslem's meridian is sunset—very typical of his departure as a governing, vivifying element; his day commences with the night, and an hour after sunset is one o'clock with him. I asked a devout follower whether it did not put him out changing his watch every day; he said he had never any occasion, that his watch went with the sun, steadily losing. Besides this great difference, they have in Pera one time, in Galata another, and at the railway stations another, sometimes amounting to a difference of twenty minutes in time.

We descended to Galata by the tunnel railway, and came out on the high street of that crowded, filthy quarter, not twelve feet wide, full of stones as already described; a rattletrap of a carriage was pushing its way through the dense population of ill-dressed Jews, Armenians, and Moslems. I put the Turks last, as the

smallest part of the population visible. One is here warned against securing a vehicle, for the bridge was close on our right, and we should have to pay two beshlicks (eighteen-pence) for crossing it in a carriage, and that we could get quicker by walking, which we did. Turning sharp to the right, a short, wide, crowded street, leads to the broad bridge of pontoons across the Golden Horn. Here a scene presents itself; four fine, tall, stalwart Mahomedans, in white loose robes and turbans, kept the bridge, standing apart and across it, facing the approaching crowd, who have to deposit in their hands a ten para piece. Little Albanian or Bulgarian girls, showing their white, pretty faces, rushed about, supplying change to each, for these stalwart guards would give none, they wore loose trowsers of white calico down to the ankle, into which they shoved a blue padded tunic supported by a belt: they were very young, and pretty, all had fine, large Oriental eyes. Being Mahomedan refugees, they were allowed to procure change, to ask alms, and all kinds of license, their modesty being undoubted, and under Moslem protection.

Passing over this unique bridge is like passing through a fancy ball; one sees in open daylight to advantage the various and the most striking costumes of the population of every country in the world. The bridge is very broad and long, having stages alongside for the Bosphorus steamers and those going up the Golden Horn. Four men also stood col-

lecting tolls on the far side, through whom we passed on and entered Stamboul. As the toll is so heavy, there is a place and stand for carriages of hire on either side of the bridge, which is consequently crossed on foot; which was quite in character with Turkish ideas to stop or block the route without benefit to either party, when a small toll would have answered all purposes. We now, without further delay, entered a carriage, and were soon permeating ruins as far as the Top Kapusi Serái, where the Europeanised Hamdy was, irrespective of the precepts of Jewish or Islamite prejudices, making a collection of Greek sculptured images in a temporary square building—a remnant of the old palace in the Seraglio Point, which was renewed and whitened up for the reception. This ‘Museum of Constantinople’ stands alone among high walls and open spaces, from which the ruins of the palace had been cleared away, and in some places they were converted into small gardens. We were very politely received by Hamdy Bey. He spoke French and Turkish fluently, gave us coffee and cigars, and explained the difficulty he had in carrying out his favourite scheme, in which he represented he could get none of the Ministers to take an interest. He was well and intimately acquainted with the Minister of Commerce, Raif Effendi, to whom he promised to introduce me next morning at eight o’clock. There was little in the Museum of any interest; female

torsos raised on stands jarred against the iconoclastic prejudices of the faithful, of which Hamdy told us many amusing stories. One was, that a piece of the lower part of a female figure which had been dug up, though very much mutilated, had to be encased in cement before the Mahomedan natives of the village, who had been ordered to send it to the Museum, would handle it, fearing some fatal effects from touching an idol.

Next morning, at eight o'clock, as arranged with Hamdy Bey, we alighted at the door of Raif Effendi, Minister of Commerce, and were at once shown into the presence-chamber. Numerous servants, in European costume and fezes, ushered us in. It was an oblong, very plain room, round the three sides of which ran a divan, from the furthest corner of which, to the right, rose the Minister to receive us, having a fine-bearded Turkish Ulema in full Arab costume on his left. In the politest manner possible he came towards us, and after the usual Turkish salutation seated me on his right (the whole of this side was otherwise unoccupied); he then resumed his seat in the corner, doubling his feet under him. The other guests, who had risen with him, reseated themselves on the side-divans; and now, after being seated, each lowering the hand to the divan in front, and then carrying it to the forehead, saluted, and received a similar salute in return. There was a dead silence as this was going on, broken by the Minister ordering coffee and pipes.

As before mentioned, the holy man to the left wore the usual robes and turban ; next him sat Hamdy ; three gentlemen of the Arab or old Moslem class, in handsome robes and fanciful white-and-gold turbans, sat on the side of the divan to my right, modestly occupying the very furthest end ; the nearest was a handsome-featured man, with large, dark, piercing eyes, and a most benevolent face. His Excellency expressed himself as very glad to see me, and that as my name was familiar to him he was pleased to make my personal acquaintance. I then replied, that having been engaged in the navigation of the Euphrates and Tigris for many years, and in commercial pursuits in the various cities of the Empire, I could not think of visiting Constantinople without paying my respects to the Minister of Commerce ; and that I was particularly pleased to learn from our mutual friend Hamdy Bey of the interest taken by his Excellency in its development. When I had finished a smile of recognition, followed by '*Ay wullah Lynch Sahib!*' passed over the face of Ibn Abd el Luteif Zohair, the Arab to my right, who recognised having seen me in Bussoreh, from which place he had lately arrived. In a very patronising manner he took up the conversation, spoke in praise of our steamers, the good they had effected since those days when a fleet of some fifteen large native river-craft conveyed the merchandise of Europe and India, after a voyage of forty days, as already described, to

Baghdad. I did not appeal to Raif Effendi, or even ask for his assistance, but, from the kind manner in which he had received me, I concluded I should have it.

I called a few days after on Hassan Fahmi, the Minister of Public Works, and had a long conversation with him on such as would be of great utility if executed at Baghdad, more particularly the erection of bonded warehouses, which he said would receive his best attention. He appeared so interested that he took his Arab pen and paper in hand, and took down all the information I could give him on the subject. I even indicated where such warehouses could be constructed, and that I was willing to take the initiative in the matter if the Minister would promise his support. On leaving, it was arranged that on the 11th I should pay a visit with him to the Porte, and see the other Ministers; and as I knew that my affairs would, in the Council of Ministers, come before him, I did not discuss them with him for the present, contenting myself with making his personal acquaintance.

On the 11th of October, 1881, I took a carriage, and drove over the rocky streets of Pera and Galata to the bridge over the Golden Horn. Paid ten piasters, and passing the magnificent mosque on the other side found a fine road leading up to the Seraglio Point. I cannot call it a street, for the open spaces, mounds of ruin, and wretched hovels on either side, will not warrant my doing so. A wind to our right up the hill near the top, and we have arrived at the gable-

end of a line of plain barracks, and two large gates lead both to the front and rear ; an open space with a few trees were in front, and, ascending the hill, the other gate led to the back of the buildings, where are a series of uneven courts, shut in by a high iron rail, in which are several gates leading to the several offices. Ours was at the end, so we had to get round the corner and drive to the far gate, which led to the Foreign Office. A respectable-looking man in a fez, and in a European frock-coat dress, opened the carriage door. I alighted, and proceeding up a few steps found myself in a long, white, undecorated hall, through which I passed into a little square room with a door on each side, at one of which, leading to the bureau of the Foreign Minister, were placed four soldiers ; the other doors communicated with the rooms for the dragomen and the clerks. The soldiers looked very dingy and shabby ; their position, fezes, guns, and unpolished belts, alone indicating their military character. There is a long gallery leading to the other end of the building, round which we came, and off it are the bureaux, or courts, of the various Ministers, each similarly guarded by soldiers when the Ministers attend, which is generally on Wednesdays and Sundays. The whole building is of a fawn or yellow colour, the sides of the doors and windows being picked out with stucco and white plaster, and the few low pillars at the entrances were white

and of the same material. As it is built on the side of the hill facing the Golden Horn, it has two stories on that side ; the lower consists of lofty square rooms, wretched warehouses and filthy recesses, used only for storing rubbish ; in some were wide, rough, unpainted wooden stairs, leading to the floor above, which was level with the entrance-courts at the rear. These are the only buildings in the neighbourhood, with the exception of the Persian Embassy, which overlooks it, which is a good house, otherwise the decay and desolation are complete. As that Minister observed, when pointing it out to me a few days previously, therein is carried on the affairs of this nation, more becoming a house of lesser fame, and from which emanates nothing tending to the wise administration or prosperity of the country.

The Ministers who were then entrusted with the affairs of the Ottoman Empire were :—

Said Pasha	...	...	...	Prime Minister.
Mahomed Nedeem Pasha,	Minister of the Interior.			
Assym Pasha	...	...	„	Foreign Affairs.
Hassan Pasha	...	...	„	Marine.
Osman Pasha (of Plevna)	...	...	„	War.
Raif Effendi	...	...	„	Commerce.
Kamil Pasha	...	...	„	Public Instruction.
Hassan Fahmi	...	...	„	Public Works.
Soubhi Pasha	...	...	„	Eskaf or Waghaf.

Of these the Parliament of Lords and Commons and

other departments of State are composed. Any change of law or international question, or proposal for a concession, comes before them ; if it has relation to public works it must be examined by a Council of Notables at Topkhana, composed of ex-Ministers and officials appointed by the Sultan. When it is passed by them it goes up to the Council of Ministers, where it is discussed and passed or rejected, in which they must be unanimous, when it is sealed by those present at the Council, and becomes a Mazbatta : then it is transferred to another office of State, *inter referendum*, Turkish Amedievtasey, where a letter is written stating the character or purport of the Mazbatta, and with it is addressed to the Sultan and sent where he resides in a silk bag, which is laid on his table. No one can present them personally. His Majesty looks at them when he feels inclined : if he doubts, it goes back into the silk bag ; if rejected, it is put away, and the whole affair despotically concluded. If he desires a modification, he states it on the Mazbatta, when the whole has to go back for reconsideration to the Council of Ministers and go through the same form. So an affair may rest for months, and perhaps years, without being sealed, and no one, I understand, can bring it to his august notice except an Ambassador ; and only he, it appears, by writing to the Palace Dragoman—that is, at present, to Munir Bey—who must, in duty bound, bring the Ambassador's letter to the notice of his Majesty, who in many

cases deigns no reply. A second letter is written, and meets the same fate. The Ambassador may call for an audience : his Majesty has a toothache, and cannot be seen : if seen — after compliments of the most profuse kind — as soon as the Ambassador comes to business the Sultan changes the subject, dismisses it with a *Bakalum*—‘ Shall see into it ;’ or, raising his brow significantly upward, means he is to take his departure : which he must do, or break relations altogether. But there is really no redress to be had by those inside the jurisdiction of the Empire. To obtain justice and attention one must have the support of the Minister or Ambassador of some foreign State ; by which, and bribery, one may succeed.

While all this state is observed, and red tape carried to the highest limit of obstruction, and the most supreme etiquette enjoined as regards officials, the most extraordinary thing is the familiar manner in which these potentates enter into conversation with their menials, viz. the Eunuch, the Architect of the Palace, or a slave, with whom they talk even on the gravest affairs of State, and are influenced by them ; therefore, considering the effeminate and sensual life of a Sultan, and his inaptitude for business habits, it is not difficult to conceive the general cause of the decay and ruin one sees stamped on everything. The people also follow their rulers in idleness and self-sufficiency.

I visited all the bureaux, and gave several *lirahs*

and mejeedeesh to the porters, so that I might become personally acquainted with these hungry individuals, who, with fezes on their heads and in European morning-frocks of blue cloth, stand at every door, with the hand ever ready to receive baksheesh. One tall man joined me with a slouching, unmilitary look, and introduced me in a casual manner to many of the secretaries, who all seemed very busy, constantly jumping up and stepping off their divans, with the paper on which they were writing in hand, and as often stepping up on the sofas and squatting on them 'Turkish fashion,' to renew the writing on the knee, as is their wont. My conductor now addressed me in English, and said he was attached to the Embassy. We walked several times along the wide gallery mentioned above, with windows on the south side and bureaux on the north, to which this gallery was the general ante-chamber. As the Ministers were all sitting a sentry or guard of soldiers stood at the door of each. This was evidently Liberty Hall, for even beggars were allowed to enter, and beggar children, women, and little girls, were observed asking alms. At the far end the gallery terminates in a little hall, off which is the bureau of the Minister of Foreign Affairs as already mentioned, and close by, a large spacious room for the dragomen of the various embassies. Here, still followed by my attaché, I sat down, when he took the liberty to ask me some curious questions, and demanded in-

formation of people at my hotel, and whether I would inform him of their actions and what they were about ; so I inferred, whether rightly or wrongly, he was there to obtain private information as to what was going on. My affairs being in the hands of Lord Dufferin, I did not encourage the conversation, and failing to get any information from me he departed. I had scarcely been alone five minutes when a very intelligent German entered, and seeing I was a European he hoped I had no business with the Porte. 'I have been here for months,' he said, 'without being able to effect anything.' Rather consoling, I thought, but still hoped I would (having confidence in English diplomatic pressure under Lord Dufferin) succeed, and returned to my solitary kiosk in Misserie's Hotel ; for it was the policy of our Ambassador that I should not at present personally broach the matter, or negotiate direct with either Said or Assym Pashas. I made friends, however, of them and their immediate *entourage*, and tacitly sanctioned a friend's promise of a valuable present to a leading man, a near relative of the Minister of the Interior, if successful ; for though I felt (contrary to all that was dinned into my ears) that without bribery I should get nothing ('*rien*,' the word generally used), yet it was better not to do so, as it went against my grain, as derogatory to all parties and to the affair in question. In the few visits I paid I confined myself to expatiating on the advantages conferred on that part

of the country with which I was familiar, by the development of trade, which, as far as possible, was conducted by the natives of the country, many of whom we taught to be engineers and good mariners, and that our own vessels were manned by native crews; which I laid great stress on, in order that it should disarm all opposition.

One cannot stand in the streets of Pera without seeing the lazy, filthy look of all around. Men squatted in every corner, in their dirty, bagging Oriental costume; votaries of Islam, putting with their naked arms those luscious fruits which a glorious climate offers without labour to their gorilla mouths; baskets like Corinthian capitals overflowing with the finest grapes, which an Armenian porter has just deposited off his back, meet you everywhere; these, and Jewish enticers of the young, claim the *pavé* for their own; while Europeans in slummy costumes hasten along, sometimes stumbling over filthy dogs, which are undisturbed by the denizens of the place.

Friday, 25th November.—I had the honour of a visit from Savalan Khan, an Armenian, whose acquaintance I had made in London at the Persian Embassy; he spoke French as fluently as a Frenchman. Two hours' interview. Reuter's concession the topic. He stated that he first diverted the traffic from Trebizond to Poti by organizing a transit through those wild regions, and that he, by loans and advances, secured the support of the Russian Government,

which enabled him to get concessions from both that and the Persian to do everything in their respective countries. It appears he did organize the traffic through both countries to Teheran, and advanced to the Persians several sums of 10,000 toman, and 1000*l.* at frequent intervals, to get his hand well in, in search of eventualities. He swore that Baron Reuter spent 200,000*l.* : 25,000*l.* to one Minister, 20,000*l.* to another, 10,000*l.* to another (all of whom he named), 40,000*l.* to the Government, and 100,000*l.* in different expenses and bribes ; that Baron Reuter offered him only 10,000*l.*—which he refused—to waive his rights ! He wanted 30,000*l.* Malcolm Khan wanted to set him aside, for whom he had no very great respect, and that he told him so. After losing all his money he has now retired on the olive-oil monopoly of Resht, out of which, he says, he makes money : for the Greeks and Armenians cannot burn mineral oil in their churches : so he can demand from them his own price. Over which the old man chuckled, to my great amusement. He ended by offering his services, if he could serve me in any way—that the only person of influence at Constantinople was Sarkees Bey, the palace architect, who saw the Sultan every day—the *Gil Blas* of Turkey for the present. The information obtained from him was more amusing than useful. I gave him none, and we parted.

After the lapse of some time I thought it my duty to forward to his Excellency the Ambassador extracts

of letters which I had received, stating that merchandise was shut out, and that there were no means of transmitting it to its destination, owing to the low state of the rivers, and that these light-draught barges were absolutely necessary, otherwise the commerce of the river could not be carried on. All this I wrote to his Excellency, to which for several days I had no reply. Then came another telegram, stating the same urgency. So I wrote a letter, enclosing it, which I took with me to Therapia. It was my third visit to that place—the second being merely to leave cards, as a visit of ceremony, after the garden-party. I felt there was now no necessity for my waiting on his Lordship, but that I should leave the letter, and I requested the footman to inform his Lordship that I called to leave it. As he informed me that his Excellency was at home, I lingered a little, to give him the opportunity of seeing me, should he wish it; when down came his Lordship, and, taking me from the hall into the garden, he appeared greatly agitated—he was, in fact, in a passion—stating it was very undiplomatic of me to press him; that he was doing all he could. And what became of my knowledge of the country, if I supposed things could, in Turkey, be done as in any other part of the world? My blood rose, for what had I done? But as a quarrel with Lord Dufferin was not to be thought of, I apologised, stating that, without any intention on my part, I regretted

if my letters had shown a wish to urge him unnecessarily. I said, 'My Lord, your assurances are quite satisfactory : I know your own sense of justice will not let the matter sleep ; I simply considered it my duty to transmit the information I had received to your Lordship, in order that, if advisable, it might be transmitted to the Prime Minister, and urge a settlement. I am grieved to find that my pressing the affair has given offence.' 'Now that I have had this conversation with you,' he said, 'it is all right. If you will wait I will fetch a letter, which I was in the course of writing to you when you came.' In this he informed me he was well aware of the importance of this matter, and that the Prime Minister had promised to attend to it. On his Lordship presenting it he apologised for his irritation, saying the affair had been worrying him ever since his arrival at Constantinople. After a short walk and a few inquiries he wished me, in his always affable and hearty manner, good-bye, and we parted, without a satisfactory answer to console me on my long, dreary drive home of over two hours. As his Excellency desired me not to press him unless I could give him some practical suggestions, all communication was apparently at an end, and I was to trust to his Lordship's action with the Prime Minister.

The latter, I may here state, on Lord Dufferin's arrival, knew all about this obstruction of the barges at Baghdat, and he was most likely at the bottom of it

all, for he has the character of being against European progress, very fanatical, and of pandering to the Sultan's worst conceptions in this respect. He, with the old school, sees that every concession multiplies European influence, and that the work falls into the hands of Christians, and consequently Islam is being shoved out. He is also an intriguer, and instead of saying to Lord Dufferin on his arrival, 'We cannot allow it,' and give his reasons for doing so, he, as I understand, politely assured the new Ambassador he would see to it at once. The Ambassador, I humbly think, should have then and there politely demanded that the obstruction should be removed, as evidently against the incidental rights of our navigation. But be this as it may, my object is to explain diplomatic action in Turkey. The order was not demanded, and the affair was from time to time postponed, and then promised the favourable consideration of the Prime Minister.

A second interview revealed, of course, that the right was questioned. This called for a reference to Firmans and Vizerial letters. The Vizerial letter of 1846, conveying the rights of navigation, of course, could not be found in such wretched archives as exist in Constantinople, where papers are always kept in bags. A copy had to be produced from London, which formed a splendid excuse for delay. Of course the Minister, on production of this letter or a copy, would have the thing righted immediately. The

copy arrived, and now a few days would bring this affair to a conclusion—so the Ambassador thought ; but the wily Turkish Minister knew otherwise. He now explained what the rules of the Empire were, and taking his stand on international law, he blandly informed the Dragoman that every empire had a right to make its own rules ; so the letter and the demand must be submitted to the Council of Ministers, and a decision obtained regarding it. In this the Ambassador was assured there would be no difficulty—a matter of a Council or two, and all would be right.

I had already called on our Consul-General and had the good fortune to find the Consul, Mr. Wrench, at home. He gave me a very depressing account of the prospects of British merchants in Turkey, who could never hold their own against the close, unrespected maladroitness of the Greek and Armenian. I also paid several visits to the heads of the Ottoman Bank, and from one and all I received a very warm reception, but cold indifference if I wanted any influential assistance : they wanted all, if they had any, for their own purposes, not to exert any in my behalf. Mr. Smythe junior, of that bank, on returning my visit after a few days, informed me that he was the correspondent of the *Daily News*, and a friend of Artin Effendi, the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, so I asked him to join me in a drive to the Sweet Waters of Europe, in order to interest him in these affairs. As a very pretty pair

of Arab horses and a nice brougham were waiting for me at the door, he accepted with pleasure the invitation.

After you get out of the long high street of Pera and its wretched suburbs a fine road is met with, bearing to the left. The Bosphorus runs north and south, and its inlet to the west, 'the Golden Horn,' curving round, drives its tip towards the north of Pera. The *grande rue* of Pera leads in the same direction north for a couple of miles, unto where the fine road above mentioned branches off, which runs over a table-land in a circular south-western direction. After leaving the road to Therapia, running north from Pera, we had the ravines of that suburb on our right, and a strange, deserted, wild expanse of black, broken hills, a most inhospitable country, on our left, not a tree or even a kiosk to diversify the desolation. In half an hour you reach a broad, palisaded way, which descends by short, steep turns, to the picturesque valley and waters at the head of the Golden Horn. There you cross the Lycus river and return on the other side of the Horn, by Stamboul, to Pera, having performed a circular drive of from three to four hours.

In the valley we found gardens and trees, and a small palace of the Sultan's falling into decay—inherent on the state of affairs existing under the present *régime*. During this interesting drive it was

arranged that my companion should obtain an interview with the Under Secretary at eight a.m., at Bashiktash, where the Dadian family, of which he is the representative, had a humble but very comfortable abode. In three or four days we found ourselves waiting in his plain, ill-furnished *salon*, for an interview, which after a quarter of a hour was accorded, and conducted in the French language, in which, having been educated in Paris, he was quite at home. Our relations with Armenia, which country had furnished many wives for many of our great men, was discussed, and my hopes that one day that country would be more than a geographical expression, and that he would be the first Governor-General, brought down from him a flood of compliments on our commercial energy,—that he always supported our enterprises whenever he had the opportunity, and would do so: but the old story of the *far niente* of the present Government stopped the way. We became great friends, dined frequently together, and discussed Oriental affairs. He requested that we should always dine alone, lest it might be supposed that his friendship would bias any opinion he gave in our interests. If imbued with the unselfish spirit of an Irishman, nothing would be beyond the capacity of this man in statesmanship; the comprehensiveness of his views, and the manner in which he grasped every phase, and the advantages and disadvantages of every action, were beautifully and clearly demonstrated

in the forcible and unmistakable language of France.

About three weeks or more after my interview with Lord Dufferin in the gardens of Therapia, I was agreeably surprised by a visit from Sir A. Sanderson, the First Dragoman of the Embassy, who, after puffing and blowing as if he had something important to communicate, informed me that he was instructed by his Lordship to say that the case would be decided on the following Wednesday. With this move in the affair I was highly satisfied. The interview was as short as possible, but I took the opportunity of stating that I should be at the Porte, in the waiting-room of the dragomen, at hand to answer any questions, and to hear from him the result. And now commenced, twice a-week, regular attendances and hopeless disappointments. One day the Council did not meet at all. Then the Prime Minister, just as they sat down, was sent for to the Palace. Next, the Egyptian affairs threw everything else into the rear. And at last, at a hurried conference, when the question was brought forward, it was rejected, and thrown aside, as a rotten English affair. But Sir A. Sanderson, by strongly urging, obtained from the Prime Minister a renewal of the discussion, and came to me to the hall of the dragomen, pointing out that I should see some of the Ministers, and urge my claim with all the power of persuasion that I possessed.

Next morning, consequently, I went to see the Minister of Marine. He received me most affably, and heard patiently all that I had to urge in favour of our barges. The two arguments with which I endeavoured to prevail with him were, that I was not seeking an extension or concession for steam navigation, but only a right to use the above as incidental thereon, which had been exercised from time immemorial by the English, when constructed of wood ; and the substitute of steel barges for wooden ones only resulted in increased benefits to commerce, and could have no international or political significance ; and being without sails, masts, or means of locomotion, and towed by steamers duly authorised, I therefore urged that I could not see what solid objection there could be. I could only construe it as an insult to their intelligence, or a wish to destroy and deprive European enterprise of its just rewards. A Turkish Admiral agreed with me, and kindly pressed very forcibly the truth of these observations. On taking leave, thanking him for the interview, I stated that I hoped the Council on Friday would reverse their previous decision.

As the morning is the only time when these Ministers can be approached, I went next day to the Minister of Commerce, Raif Effendi, pressing the same arguments. He was more an Arab than a Turk, as explained on a former visit to him. Here I was more at home ; and pressing the same argu-

ments, I repeated a well-known Arab saying, that when iron sparkles and swims on water there is nothing left for the Arabs but flight—which could not for a moment be entertained in these days. He promised he would put the matter in its true light. Hamdy Bey, who accompanied me, in talking of the Ministers who objected, exclaimed, in the free tone of Asiatic *parlance*, they were no better than donkeys; at which Raif Effendi laughed, and said the real affair was not understood by them.

I had now to leave the northern suburbs of Pera, where the last-named Minister lived, and to cross the Golden Horn to Stamboul as quickly as possible, in order to catch Mahomed Nedeem Pasha, the Minister of the Interior, who lived in a remote quarter of that city. I had only with me the dragoman of an influential pasha, whose influence with Nedeem was supreme. We were ushered by two or three men in European long frocks and dresses, with the usual fez cap, into a plain, undecorated room, with a carpet, and the Turkish divan at the end. And as the old gentleman had not yet left his harem, we were left to enjoy pipes and coffee, the attendants assuring us we should have an early interview, as my dragoman was well known and popular amongst them.

The Pasha received us standing, and requested us to be seated. After the usual salaam I introduced the subject on which I had come, feeling assured he would see the justice of my remarks.

His father, Rashid Pasha, had been Governor of that valayat during my residence at Baghdad, which furnished a topic of interest to us both. His lifting brows indicated that he had heard enough, and I was assured by his subsequent smile that I had his support.

All these visits, I was delighted to find, were one and all successful, for on Friday afternoon Sir A. Sanderson informed me that a decision was given in my favour, running thus:—

‘Pera, Nov. 3.

‘I am glad to inform you that the case of the barges was decided in your favour at yesterday’s Council of Ministers.’

The effect of success on the animal spirits is really something extraordinary after all my trials of patience and endless disappointments. I felt quite a different individual; my spirits were light, and buoyantly happy, and I called at the Embassy next day to thank Sir A. Sanderson for the communication. He said it was now settled, and only required the Sultan’s signature; that the Mazbatta* would be signed by all the Ministers, and forwarded in a few days to the Sultan, when it would come out in the shape of an Iradé.

But now a most unfortunate affair occurred. Sir A. Sanderson, who obtained his spurs for the Layard-Cyprus convention, had taken his two months’ leave,

* The ‘Mazbatta’ means ‘approved and affirmed;’ the ‘Iradé,’ ‘the Imperial will granted.’

and, in Lord Dufferin's words, vanished into space. The Mazbatta was forwarded in a dilatory manner to the Yildiz Kiosk, in a silk bag, there to lie unheeded up to the present day; to account for which would oblige me to enter into a long digression on Gladstonian policy in the East, which, while seriously damaging to English interests for the time, may, it is to be hoped, turn up trumps at last.

On Friday, 4th November, 1881, the day being, as usual, very fine, I drove with a young gentleman of the Consulate, who had acquired a good knowledge of the Turkish language, to the hills behind the Yildiz Kiosk, in order to enjoy a walk in the open with the lovely panorama of the Bosphorus below us. The road from Galata, where we took a carriage, passes along the Bosphorus to the Dolma Bakcha Palace, and then ascends the hills rather in a steep incline, until the Yildiz is reached; passing which, on to the hills beyond, we found an open, treeless country, with some little greensward and fallow land, over which we walked to the top of the plateau which commands the junction of the roads from Pera and Galata, with that to Therapia and the towns on the Bosphorus. Nothing could exceed the loveliness of the day: the air was balmy, and the breezes on the heights fresh and exhilarating; below us lay the high promontories of Stamboul and Scutari, their cities on the water's edge greeting each other from the opposite shores of Europe and Asia, covered with that pictur-

esque brown tile with which the houses were roofed, and most artistically interspersed and dominated everywhere by domes and minarets, or by the sepulchral green of the lofty cypress, which, seen along the line of the horizon against a cloudless azure sky, contrast well with the calm, dark, almost black, colour of the Bosphorus, as in deep shade it lies nestled among the cities at our feet. The Marmora, with its islands, spread its silvery plain in the distance, bounded by the mountains of the Asiatic Olympus. Nothing could be more sublime or more beautiful than the position we occupied as we stood in full health enjoying the balmy air of so lofty a solitude. Close by our path we observed a man, seated, Oriental fashion, on a knoll, to all appearance equally interested in the scene, dressed in a close-fitting Persian gown; a shawl of cashmere encircled his waist, a small green turban was prettily and compactly folded close round his head, and his features were very fine and full of intelligence. I remarked that he wore European shoes, and an umbrella lay by his side. Attracted by these European emblems we stood for a moment near him, when our observation drew from him some, as we thought, Hindustani expressions: he failed to complete what he wished to ejaculate and laughed, when we saluted him. He stated in Arabic his apology for attempting to speak in a language which he himself scarcely understood; and was delighted to find we were more masters of his

own than he of ours, or of even his attempted Hindustani, and at once introduced himself as a sheikhly, the son of the Nakeeb of Baghdad, who had the charge there of the shrine of Hadji abd ool Kader, stating that his property had been seized by the local governor of that place, and that he came to Constantinople nine months ago seeking redress ; that he had over and over again petitioned, but could get neither an answer nor even an interview, and he was now watching the various roads which lead to the Yildiz Kiosk, in the hopes that the Sultan's mother would pass, and, respecting his green turban, would receive from him a petition which would eventually procure him redress somehow or other. We both felt very much interested in the man ; he looked so patient and unvindictive, saying in most emphatic language, 'Patience is perfection ; patience will gratify desire.'

An immense amount of it, and a good solid constitution, with a perfect absence of every consideration due to oneself and to his expenditure, must qualify the individual who succeeds with the Turkish Government of the present day. There is, in the first place, no public opinion—at least, no expression of it ; there are no definite parties to expose an injury ; the Sultan chooses whom he will. Each of these becomes immediately a star of greater or lesser magnitude, but each with a perfect system of lesser magnates around him. The interests

of these must be secured to get at the great man. And so of every other. Then these magnates have again all their separate intrigues, and are a long time until they one and all get seasoned into the due consideration of any matter. At this stage the applicant is privately informed that it is the Minister of Marine who now objects; and that he must get at him. When he is pacified or fed, then another turns up who has got hungry, or is otherwise affected. When all are convinced, the Mazbatta is passed. Then another set of men are to be faced: these are the Secretaries, the Palace Dragoman, the Eunuch—the most influential of all; and, as mentioned already, I heard from Savalan Khan that Sarkees Bey, the palace architect, is most influential, as he sees the Sultan, and he alone can reach his august majesty; then I heard from another that Raghieb Bey, the Secretary, has the ear of the Sultan; and afterwards, when this man is secured, you are informed that Riza Bey is the favourite of the moment; and after you may have almost cut your throat in despair you hear that it is all useless—the Notables of Topkhana, the Council of Ministers, the Ambassadors, the officials of the palace, all go for nothing—the Sultan is despotic, and the only person to see the affair concluded is the Eunuch, and he is unapproachable, so that you are as far off as ever. In order to survive the effects of procrastination and despair, and feelings of helplessness and maddening

solitude, one must seek some means of diverting the mind, and, under the circumstances, can find nothing better than

A VISIT TO ST SOPHIA.

All that is grand, solemn, and abstract in religion, is impressed on the mind by a visit to the Mosque of St. Sophia. The Moslem gathering his linen, and bending at one of the numerous fountains in the spacious court outside, to wash his arms and feet, first attracts attention. As soon as he has washed these members, and introduced the latter into slippers, he toddles off to enter this great temple ; and, scarcely observable on its vast area, kneels down and prays. We, however, were stopped at the door, had our feet put into slippers, paid a small fee, and were allowed to enter. Passing a long and spacious aisle, which exists on either side, we found ourselves standing on the verge of its carpeted centre, arrested by the admiration of its height and extent. The pillars, pilasters, and walls, are but objects of secondary importance. Awe and reverence are imposed by the vastness of the enclosed space, scarcely broken by the slender little chandeliers; and lights descending by long chains from above, in which a solitary light here and there glimmered, and enabled one to form some conception of the distance and expanse of this great temple.

Our guide pointed out, looming through iconoclastic effacings by the Moslem, gigantic figures of the cross and the grotesque faces of mediæval saints and

angels; also the mosaics which had fallen from the roof, picked up by the faithful and sold to the idolaters, for such they consider us Christians; and really, considering we demand such accessories to our worship, they are not far wrong. They themselves eschew all outward and visible signs. Their inward and spiritual abstract worship of the One God, and their ever-recalling memory of His prophets, are sufficient for them; so in large circles on the walls figure only the names of God and the Prophets. We walked through the building: it was entirely covered with rich carpeting, the lines of which were rather askew, so as to indicate to those who knelt down on them the proper direction in order to face Mecca, and, to the European, suggesting its Christian origin. The direction of Mecca was at its south-eastern corner, where there is a pulpit, to which a straight stair leads; and the eastern nave had large square entablatures covered with most exquisite Arabic inscriptions. My companion was a well-read, clever American, full of thought and intelligence, with a rare facility for appreciating every phase of human thought, and one whose literary talents had raised him to affluence in the rising city of Chicago. Though it would be now impossible to express, much less indite, even had I the facility of a shorthand writer, the series of ideas and reflections which passed like stormy shadows over the fields of our imaginations, while standing in this great temple, with bated breath, still we came by

degrees to express that such a sublime sanctuary was all that was necessary for devotion; and the following religious conclusions were come to, that if God alone is to be worshipped, and no accessories for devotion are necessary, this temple is all that is required, and the Moslem is right in effacing the images introduced by a fetish Christianity; that all Scripture is against it. These precepts of the Koran, these inscriptions, must, as far as they inculcate devotion and morality, be inspired, as we must take all such Scripture to be. How, then, have these people so decayed? Their harems, I remarked, have spoilt their capacity for work. This had little effect when they were a nation of warriors, but that excitement and the stimulus of religion once taken away, they sank into an illiterate effeminacy; whereas Christianity, raising the softer sex and the possessions of their attractions as the reward of chivalry, has created an ever-living impulse to Platonic love and exertion. Mahomed's position in the deserts of Ishmael was not so favoured in this respect as that of Jesus in the beautiful valleys of Galilee; and though Mahomed raised his people from the depths of sin, idolatry, and infanticide, and established his religion on a par with, and on the base of that of all the prophets before him, yet he lost sight of the woman, and her education, and the position she had been called to occupy by Christ in the economy of man. The Mahomedan, to succeed, must take this to heart, and adopt it, for which he will find ample

warrant in his Koran, where Jesus is said to be divinely conceived,* a mighty Prophet, working miracles, endowed with the Holy Spirit, and now alive with God, and He will come again. All of which is Christian faith, to which we also should keep, and not invent terms which do not exist in the Bible to offend our brothers of Islam, who cannot understand the Trinity, nor the Almighty begetting a Son anthropomorphically; though they admit the possibility of Christ being born of the Holy Spirit, and that the blessed Virgin's conception was immaculate: a conception warranted by His purity and His being without sin, free from all feelings of self-interest and passion, and alive only in the love of alleviating the sorrows of others, He sheds a halo round the female character, inspiring us that woman must be always regarded with the highest Platonic feelings of respect. Our thoughts must be holy and pure as we converse with them. To her He imparts His holiest inspirations, that 'God is a Spirit:' and 'to My God and your God.' Why, then, should not holy Moslem men and women be seen entering this temple, and, seated by their happy children, inculcate the great principles of the same inspiration? This is religion, in which Christian and Moslem may equally agree. Wisdom is the knowledge of what is true. Let us accept as an article of

* The virginity of Fatima, even after her motherhood, is a point of orthodoxy in Islam, and in this respect she is compared to Mary.—See Burton, vol. i. p. 315, and in the 'Miracle Play.'

faith everything which tends to human perfection as an illumination from the great Unknown; in Christ this spirit shone. His deductions are as bright as the day, and the light of His morality is the life of men. We owe the purification of Christianity (Protestantism) to Mahomedanism, and its contact with the early Crusaders. Let Mahomedanism now ally itself to it, and form a perfect faith.

Such were our mutual observations and reflections as we passed out into the spacious court, duly railed round, and full of little square white buildings, each surmounted by a dome.

From St. Sophia we drove to the celebrated Almeidan, and passed the obelisk brought from Heliopolis, near Cairo, which was set up by the Emperor Theodosius. From thence we went over neglected ruins to a rising ground close by, under which was the great cistern of Constantine, said to have 1000 columns. A Turk was seated on a mound of stones at apparently a cabin door; he saluted us, and held out his hand for the few piasters, which given he opened the door, and we descended some twenty-five steps into a pillar-sustained crypt. We could only go a little distance, as it was full of filth and rubbish; there was no water, nor had there been any for ages.

Tuesday, 22nd November, 1881.—After posting my letters, went to the Ottoman Bank to ask Mr. Smythe to accompany me for a drive and

walk; found he had not finished his letters; left him for an hour to see Hamdy Bey at the museum above mentioned at the Top Kapusi Serái. Descending a broad part of the street in Galata leading down to the bridge, I met an open carriage with a fine pair of English horses, so looked out for somebody of consequence in it. Lord Dufferin was the sole occupant. I received and returned a gracious bow, and had not proceeded far when the loungers said I was called back; so stopping, I found his Lordship waiting for me. He had pulled up, to say he was anxious to see me, to tell me that the affair at the Palace not being attended to as early as he wished, he had just been in communication with the principal Chamberlain (Munir Bey), who suggested that he should address a letter to the Sultan on the subject, which he now intended to do. I thanked his Excellency, sighing over the time it had taken. He said, 'Yes, you thought on arrival it would be settled in a few days, when you wrote me those pressing letters spurring me to settle it. I then said, "Poor Lynch does not know what a tough job he has before him."'

'Yes, that is very true, my Lord; but now that we have got it through the Council it seems to stick in the Palace. I have just received a communication from the Foreign Office, informing me of your Excellency's telegram, and stating that your demands were complied with.'

‘Whose demands?’

‘Your Lordship’s,’ said I; ‘and I take the liberty of mentioning it, that your Lordship may have, on such authority, the justification of now pressing the matter:’ but I found I was on delicate ground and, adroitly as I could, changed the conversation, merely wishing to leave on his Excellency’s mind the suggestion that the time had come for a little more than persuasion. I told him I had seen Artin Effendi, who promised to rake up the affair and excite action, and that I was then on my way to Hamdy Bey, a great friend of Munir Bey, the Chamberlain. With his assurances that he would do all he could we parted. I found Hamdy Bey mounting old tiles, by placing them side by side in a large square tray of liquid cement. We went on the terrace, commanding a most glorious view of Stamboul, Pera, Galata, and the Golden Horn.

‘What a splendid country!’ said Hamdy; ‘and what a Government! They do nothing. There are two distinct parties in the State: men of progress, who can do nothing; and men who can do everything, but do nothing.’

Such was Hamdy’s opinion.

Wednesday, 23rd November.—Had Artin Effendi and his son, a fat young man, to dinner. He came very early, at 6 p.m., and we had a long chat together. He confirmed the statement that the Mazbatta was at the palace, and he assured me he would do all in his

power to push it through as early as possible. We had plenty of time for a long discussion on Oriental affairs, when, whether suiting his conversation to his audience or not I cannot say, he was very Russophobic, and expressed his firm opinion that the Government must cling to the English alliance or be lost (*perdu*), when his son and Mr. Smythe arrived, who were to dine with me. After dinner he gave me a fearful picture of the present state of affairs in this country. All the Ministers had their several gangs of intriguers, and they never came to any decision as long as they could defer it, hoping each would get the better hand of the other; and that as soon as he has explained a matter to his Majesty some slave, or eunuch, destroys all his influence. He is much in favour of the Sultan settling with his *créanciers*, or the unfortunate bondholders, but very bitter against the Russians, whose claim, he says, is only second to the above. 'The English bondholders are just. They have lent their money, and are satisfied with one per cent. They are private individuals, who cannot force payment, whereas the Russians are a Government. After massacring our people they exact a debt under compulsion, and now they want to tighten the halter. *Canailles!* they have asked the revenues of Erzeroom! What does that mean? They will in a year get up a revolution there, and say, as you cannot put it down, they must, to get their revenue. England is our friend. We have

estranged her ; let us get her back by making just reforms, and throwing ourselves entirely into her hands. If we perish, then our fate is decided ; but if fate is otherwise, it is our only chance.' He told me he expressed himself thus to the Sultan : ' Weigh the advantages of joining Russia and the disadvantages. Do the same with England.' He recounted then every one for and against. Conterminous boundaries and opposing interests of the former, and the objects to be attained, disadvantages and advantages of alliances, all were in favour of England. ' Without her we must fall.' His views are, ' Turkey must hold to England or fall.' ' One year will decide.'

I dwelt on the resources of the countries with which I was familiar, and to which he listened with great interest. I told him how my efforts to open up the country to the commerce of the world had proved so far effectual ; how my efforts in the direction of the cultivation of hemp and indigo were frustrated ; and how the pumps I had sent out years ago for irrigation were shut up in the Arsenal at Baghdad to this very day.

Logothete gave us a capital dinner, twenty-five francs ahead—very dear without wine. And the whole conversation I could seldom get diverted from the usual topic, the misgovernment and decay of this once splendid empire.

' Well, Mr. Lynch,' he said, ' if I ever get into power you shall have as many steamers on the river as you like ; and you will have no obstructions, but

have every facility to "go ahead." And this I stated at the Council of Ministers; and to one and all I told them plainly, "Ask yourselves, Is this what Mr. Lynch is doing good for commerce and the country? If it is, grant his claim; but if against the interest of our country, stop him. And, owing to what has been done by himself and his Company in having provided those barges, and during the famine saved the lives of hundreds, and imported grain at a reduction of half freights, you should offer him your official thanks, instead of obstructing him." Such was, I was glad to see, the opinion of the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs at Constantinople.

He observed on parting, 'Wait until Tuesday;' from which I gathered that in the meantime he would have an opportunity of seeing the Sultan, and obtaining the long-sought-for *Iradé*.

Lord Dufferin had returned from Therapia, and the Embassy had been for several days installed in its palace in Pera. I had also duly left my card, and had been honoured by his Excellency forwarding his to my hotel. I had several interviews with both European and Turkish officials, all of whom took a very gloomy view of affairs; not only that there was a dead block in all current matters, but an intense feeling of dislike on the part of the Sultan to further anything English, that he put everything aside except intrigue in the affairs of Egypt, and cultivating the friendship of Ulemas and fanatics of the Maho-

medan faith. Without even consulting his Ministers, he sent off two Commissioners to Egypt when England took a serious view of Arabi's revolt against the Khédive, which resulted in bringing the combined fleets of England and France to Alexandria, and gave rise to renewed action on the part of the Dragomen of the Embassies, and a constant rushing to and fro between the Porte at Stamboul and the Yeldiz Kiosk. This continued until the Beiram festival commenced, when the flocks of sheep for the sacrifice, and young boys with lambs for their respective households on their backs, carrying them as they would a child, with the lamb's little patient face next theirs, amused the population of Constantinople. When these no longer encumbered the streets, through which I often waded, ankle deep in mud, over rocks and stones, I proceeded to the Embassy, to inquire if I might see his Lordship. I was informed he had not yet returned from a visit to the Porte. I had, however, scarcely reached my hotel on my return, when his Lordship sent his 'chaush' for me. I was immediately introduced, and two cups of coffee, which had evidently been previously ordered, were brought in. After a very few general remarks he introduced the subject on which I had come, and the difficulties which presented themselves. I remained silent, having heard of them already from Prezioso, wishing to ascertain the action his Excellency had taken in the affair, when he stated that he had written a strong letter to Munir

Bey, who must have communicated it to the Sultan, but that he had received no reply. He then said he caused a second letter to be written and to be taken to the Palace by a chaush, who was not to come back without an answer: he was even to sleep there until he received one. He could do no more: when the chaush returned he would let me know the result. He then went into the whole question. The Prime Minister, he said, appeared always favourable, but there were intrigues and rivalry against us, which caused much delay and even rejection: but all this we had now successfully combated; that really the Mazbatta was on the Sultan's table, where tons of work lie. His Imperial Majesty wants to do everything himself, which, he truly stated, is perfectly impossible; and then he has all manner of official ceremonies to get through, and is in constant fear of being assassinated. He is always taking measures for self-protection. Fancy having to go through all this! He assured me of his opinion that the delay arose simply from press of work, and that it was impossible affairs could long continue in this state. Nothing was done. When he alluded to rivalry on the part of the Sassoons, I mentioned my connexion with Colonel Taylor, who protected their father from the tyranny of Daoud Pasha at Baghdad years ago, and that we did all we could to conciliate them and induce them to join us, and that I could not believe there was anything in it, for I had their assurances they would not oppose us.

I also alluded, as delicately as I could, to the rapid redress obtained by the Americans for an injury to one of their people at Salonica under pressure of the American Embassy, which I scarcely could credit. 'Nor do I,' said his Excellency ; 'for the Sultan stood out a long time very firm against the combined fleets of Europe in the little Dulcigno affair.' He received me with the greatest courtesy, and accompanied me to the head of the stairs as I left, hoping in his assurances that it only required a little more patience to see the thing concluded.

On my return I found a friend waiting, whom I was to take to the great Persian representation of the retreat or procession of his followers after the massacre of Hussain, which is celebrated on the 10th of the month Moharrum. On this evening the climax, or final ceremony of the ten days' festival, was to be performed, indicating the faith, fervour, and the power which the memory of that fatal day on the plains of Kerbela keeps existing in the hearts of the ever-mourning votaries of the unfortunate Ali and his descendants, so beautifully described by the Roman historian. Every day during this festival a chorus recites the conversations, the dreams, and the prophecies of the great men of old, setting forth the melancholy events of the 'Miracle Play.' The Persian Minister, with a vast degree of reverence in his looks, told me, on a previous occasion when I visited him, that he had secured an old Khan, the Walida Khanah, as

the Imam Barrah for this great Persian ceremony, and asked me if I should like to see it; of which invitation I now availed myself. We entered a large, enclosed, square court, about 100 yards wide, surrounded by low buildings, consisting of a raised dais and corridor in front, off which were rooms for goods, carpets, &c.: the court was, in fact, an ordinary caravansary for the sale of carpets. The centre of the square was occupied by a small two-story building, with straight flights of wooden steps, or stairs, outside it to the top story, which were crowded with spectators. About twelve feet in front of the dais and corridor was a line of trees, outside which were two lines of rope, which marked the route of the procession. Every other place was crowded. As we entered, a Persian, commissioned by his Ambassador, took possession of us, and led us to a place on the dais set apart for his friends. The Persian authorities were particularly *empressé* in their civilities, particularly one whom I had known in London, who addressed me as his Consul-General, and assisted me to a seat on the dais. Before us on a table were a number of lamps, glass shades, and urns for light and refreshment. Tumblers of tea were served in the Persian manner, and I was pleased to see that we were soon joined by Lord Dufferin, from whom I had only parted an hour before, and some of his suite. The corridor and its arches were brilliantly illuminated, over which all round hung a black cloth about six feet deep. At

the corners of the square outside the line marked for the procession stood great blazing fires in large open caldrons, which shed a lurid light over the whole.

The first procession consisted of a party of musicians with drums, horns, and cymbals, preceded by men uncovered to the waist, beating with loud claps their left breasts with the palms of their hands, immediately followed by a chorus of men reciting, at the top of their voices, prayers and imprecations on the death of Hussain, and calling on Ali and the Prophets. Their litany comprised prayers for all existing sovereigns, among whom, I understood, by an undertone approving assertion of Juad Khan, was the Empress of India. They slapped their breasts so violently as even to injure themselves, keeping time in doing so, the noise of which could be heard right round the whole course. Several wild, black-haired, dark-looking dervishes, bare-headed, staggered amongst them, shouting their religious incantations; but these had not their breasts bare. Persians in ordinary dress mingled in the procession; some, with handkerchiefs to their eyes, others actually crying and sobbing. Turkish soldiers kept the course of the procession, and Turkish officers, accompanied by Persian masters of the ceremonies, headed the gangs, to keep line and order. The above procession went round twice, and disappeared. Then came the grand affair, kept in order as before, headed by two lofty flags,

the banners of Hussain, and folded tents on poles ; after which came four or five rows of young men, naked also to the waist, with immense black wet clouts, which they swashed over their bare shoulders against their backs, and wailed loudly, heaving heavy sighs and sobs. Then came a bed on shafts, carried by two white horses, covered over with an arching of dark green cloth, in which sat a child—to represent, I believe, Abdullah, the son or the little nephew of Hussain. There were spots of blood upon it, as well as on the white caparison of two horses which followed amid criers, when the most fearful part of the representation now succeeded. Two lines of men, swaggering shoulder to shoulder, in white shirts besmeared and dripping with blood, came arm in arm, moving onward but sideways, each line facing the other on either side of the course. They had short broadswords in their hands, with which they attempted to and did gash their foreheads, and shouted, as in a frenzied war-dance ; the blood streamed from all their heads, over their faces, eyes, and down their white dresses, even to the ground. A man in ordinary clothes walked behind each, holding long sticks, with which they warded off the swords of the devotees from their skulls and foreheads as best they could. A warder stood behind each for this purpose also, and other men walked in front sponging off the blood, to enable them to see. There were about twenty men in each row, and I was given to under-

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stand that they sometimes in their howling, excitement, and electrical sidelong movement, kill themselves. It is a most appalling sight.

When this latter procession appeared we found the rows of lamps on the edge of the dais prevented our seeing it well, and ascertaining that the actual sword business was coming on, amid the general interest we moved down on to the arena, and got next the ropes, alongside of a tree, against which Lord Dufferin abriter himself. I was to the right, on the other side of the tree, and a circle of Englishmen soon stood round—an improvised guard for his Lordship. When this was over, Mirza Djvad Khan, first Secretary of the Persian Embassy, approached, announcing the termination of the ceremony. We then, under the protection of the Persian and the English Embassies' chaushes, having shoved our way through an immense crowd, regained our carriages in safety.

The Mahomedans may be divided into two sections, the Sunnies and the Sheahs; the former are purer, less complicated in their system of orthodoxy, taking for their guide the Koran and the saying of Mahomed: discarding all others, they acknowledge all the Imams who politically succeeded their Prophet as equal. The Sheahs being principally Persians, and of an Aryan race, discard the two first Imams (Omar and Abubekr), claim Ali as the first Imam and first martyr in Islam: they pay him almost divine honours. The Pauline Churches resemble the Sunnies, while the

Sheahs are the followers of the Roman Church, with their pictures and prayers to the saints. They invoke Ali and his descendants. Ali was the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, and his children by Fatima, the daughter of Mahomed, Hassan and Hussain. The tragic end of the latter, murdered on the 10th of Mokarrum on the plains of Kerbela, has given rise to this celebrated commemoration. In this play, which has lasted now for ten days, the Prophets of the Old Testament (particularly Joseph) are made to act their sufferings, but proclaim that theirs are nothing to those of Hussain, whom they term 'the key to the lock of sorrow.' Mahomed is therein made to declare prophetically that the blood of Hussain is the atonement for the sins of his people. The Semitic races have seldom sought accessories for their worship, but the Aryan races require to associate with the abstract worship of the Power Unknown some tragic pictorial event, to excite their religious fervour. A Dervish of Cabul exclaims to those weeping, 'Has thy Abbas been slain as he sat dying with thirst on the banks of the Euphrates?' The accompanying genealogical tree will throw light on the actors in the play.

The river of Babylon where the daughters of Zion wept is not far from the plains of Kerbela, and there now the children of Ishmael weep; and the gilt domes, seen from afar, surmount the great mosques in which their tombs are enshrined, and attract crowds of votaries to the banks of the Euphrates.

HOWLING DERVISHES.

ON Sunday, 27th of November, instead of going to church, went to see the Howling Dervishes. The guides call them *Les Dervisch hourlants*; the Turks give them their real name, *Dervish Mevlavi*. We descended from the grand Rue de Pera, and passed the gate of the British Embassy, down into a deep valley, through muddy lanes and rocks, stepping from stone to stone, and up the opposite hill, when, turning round a very narrow lane, with a cabin to our left, we found ourselves at a door, through which, descending a few steps, we reached a small, narrow court, the floor of which was very clean: a shed opposite was laid out in clean rooms, with sedans. Walking up the little court we found ourselves at the entrance of the meeting-room in which the performance is carried on. Shoes were religiously deposited. Those of us who had not colashes pretended something, when we were as quickly as possible ushered across a corner of the room and up a staircase on to a balcony, which occupied a commanding position for seeing the performance.

The room was about 35 ft. by 25 ft. Two sides, with the exception of a small part near the door, had a colonnade supporting a narrow gallery. The pillars, floor, and whole structure, were of wood and plaster. The room was lofty, and the walls were

simply white, on which were black ovals, in the centres of which the names Ali and Mahomed were written in large white characters. The floor of the room was well laid, the wood close and partly polished by use and rubbing. Standing at the door one saw, on the furthest corner to the right, a tall man alone, close to a high corner-looking fire-place, before which was spread a carpet and some sheepskins, by the side of which he stood. Though the corner decoration had the appearance of a high mediæval fire-place, it may have been an open cupboard containing relics. The man wore a long greenish robe, with a green turban wound round a black cap ; he had a black beard and a long sanctimonious face. The opposite side was occupied by a row of men, who stood leaning against the wall forming the left or west side ; and most likely the corner on the opposite side, where the tall holy man stood, was their true direction towards Mecca.

As I said, the room was about 25 ft. wide, and it took some fifteen men to occupy the side, which were supplemented at the corners by a few young men and boy aspirants. The men stood arm to arm, as close as possible, against the wall, dressed in different coloured robes, with white skull-caps on their heads, some with a bit of green turban. These were the howlers. In front, and spread longitudinally from them, was a fine Persian carpet, about 8 ft. by 5 ft., on the edges of which, on each side, just below at the

feet of the howlers, sat two men, Turkish-fashion, on the floor, habited like Moolahs and facing each other, their sides towards the Howlers, and seated just in front of them. The latter commenced repeating, over and over again, 'There is nothing except God; all creation His—everything;' over and over again, 'His.' Then they ejaculate His praise in solemn cadences, ending in thousands of repetitions of '*Lá iláhá il Úlláh.*' They keep up this same expression in monotonous, swinging sounds, so 'oud and fast as to degenerate into hysterical double notes, or two howls of '*Lah la,*' condensing the *Lá iláhá il Úlláh* into *Lá i Úlláh.* All this time, and during the greatest and animal-like bass sounds of the Howlers, the Moolahs on the carpet pitch their voices in high tenor notes, as they recite verses from the Koran. It is wonderful the effect this has: the great bass dwelling on and keeping up that loud monotone howl of declaration that 'There is no God but God—*Lá iláhá il Úlláh,*' which forms the bass, and the tenor strains clearly enunciating these recitations from the Koran, declaring, 'In Him we rest, let Him lead us in the path of those rightly directed, and not in the misled ways of those,' and so on; repeating at the very highest pitch of their voices, and with the palms of their hands to their ears, they sing out these lofty aspirations. And while these clear and well-pitched recitations are going on, the Dervishes continue their low, deep, thudding howl, or wail, as if from one being,

of *Lá illáhd il Úlláh*, bending the knees and bowing their heads, until nothing prevents them from falling in the hysterical fit into which they have worked themselves but the wall and mutual support.

This religious excitement produced by song is one of its attributes, as may be witnessed in the mournful wail of the Persians weeping the death of Hussain in their 'Tazia,' or of those lofty and more polished recitations in the 'Stabat Mater' of Rossini, *qui non flebit matrem Christi si viderent*. They fancy that, by calling on the name of their deity and asserting his unity with mournful sobs and ejaculations, they will create a divine element in themselves; that they will thereby exorcise their souls from all evil; and having driven away the evil spirits, this holy man can walk on children without hurting them: for their great holy Sheikh at the other end of the room, near the relics, bows and bends the knees all the time standing in his place, and now is supposed to be eminently fit to work these miracles, and to heal the sick and effect miraculous cures.

While the ceremony is going on, one or two lads and two little girls of the poorer class, the latter in long dresses, came and stood behind those who recited, and bent the head and body in time with the others. They also beat time with their hands, and seemed to enter into the spirit of the whole affair. These, with little children, were at the end of the ceremony placed in rows on their backs before the holy man, who, slightly

supported, trod on them just across the hips and pelvis, which did not appear to hurt them ; the children of eight or ten seemed to enjoy it, and ran to drag others to undergo the same operation, with their young little faces upwards, the very young being held between two men. Some lads and men were, while standing close to him, touched, kissed, and some had his hands passed down their heads, shoulders, and arms, in order to effect cures, paying five piasters each. We retired as the room was cleared.

Those who sat down at the table d'hôte at Misserie's Hotel could scarcely be designated (for the most part at least) as travellers. They were rather suitors seeking concessions from the Government, or the payment of claims, or of appointments ; some actually nominated to places, but without employment ; always ready but never wanted. They were of all nationalities, and, consequently, each jealous of and anxious to know what the other was about. My Chicago friend was however, I knew, a *bond fide* traveller, and he often amused me by telling me the numerous inquiries made of him as to who people were, and what object pursuing. One young fellow amused me very much. He had gone to Greece, *à la* Byron, hoping there would have been war between Greece and Turkey : he was a Philhellenist. Another had come on a similar errand to join the Turks. He had letters to an English officer on the frontier, who himself was listlessly waiting for employment. He stated

on arrival that he would not take any office which did not give him 500*l.* a-year, when his friend retorted, 'Then there are only two courses open for you ; either get back to England, or pull out your eyes, make an object of yourself, and sit on the bridge over the Golden Horn, famous for deformed creatures of every description.' There was a gentleman of the Jewish persuasion who would introduce everybody to everybody. He insisted on talking and setting forth that he knew everything ; he would then interest you, first from his manner, expecting to obtain some information : but he knew very little, or at least if he did he so disappointed you that you felt a wish to cut him, and if you did there passed over his dark, swarthy face, that Jewish imperturbable smile of self-contentment, sure he would have you again by his officiousness. However, I made the acquaintance of a Director of the Ismid Railway, and as they were giving a *déjeuner à la fourchette en campagne*, and an express train to Ismid, they very kindly asked me to join their party.

Leaving Misserie's Hotel at 7 a.m., we descended through the tunnel lift, as I may call it, to the head of the bridge, and half-way along it to the wharf alongside it, where we found a small steamer about starting for Haidar Pasha, a scala on the Scutari side of the Sea of Marmora. Rounding the Seraglio Point, the rapid stream of the Bosphorus swept us towards the sea. The sun had risen and lit up the

white castellated walls of Constantinople, which, rising from the waters along the western horizon, formed a line of magic splendour, a kind of mirage of architectural magnificence, as tier over tier its lofty promontory was covered by a succession of domes and minarets ; those of St. Sophia (four in number) crowning the ancient Byzantium. The tower of Galata, easily recognised in the bright haze of morn, made a most charming scenic spectacle as we sped over the bright waters of Marmora to the Asiatic shore, which presented cliffs, on the prettily undulating plateau of which, well wooded with umbrageous trees, was the English burial-ground, the last resting-place of some of our Crimean warriors. Rounding the cliffs, we entered the little Bay of Kadikoi, the ancient Chalcedon. We landed on the beach at the scala called Haidar Pasha, which was protected by a rough breakwater of unlaied rocks. Passing through a lot of idle people, whose whole life seems to be spent in smoking or sipping coffee, we entered the railway station, which, of course, is all European. Here a lot of introductions took place, so that the party might amalgamate and amuse each other. The first to clasp my hand was Hamdy Bey, whom I was glad to see. As the train left Haidar Pasha, a long, sloping, meadow-like *paysage* presented itself, leading to heights crowned with forests of cypresses, skirting which we rounded a bay, and entered the eastern suburbs of Kadikoi to our right.

The train not being a passenger one, we stopped near the various villas, which gave you the idea of poverty and decay in their even temporary construction, and though the fertile gardens and hills were covered with the vine which supplied Constantinople with the finest grapes in the world (the Chaush), yet there was no attempt at gardening or flowers. Kadikoi is becoming a Greek village again, and many Europeans have houses here, and it contains the only studio for painting in this part of the world, that of Hamdy Bey. As we pulled up, several Mahomedan little girls and boys, belonging to the members of our party, joined us, and were much petted and caressed : in fact we represented European progress ; and as our *chef* declared now, 'Mr. Lynch, we are on the line of rail from Constantinople to Baghdad,' one will see by a glance at the map that he was right.

Europe and Asia send out two promontories separating the two seas, by an equable belt 200 miles long and about 20 broad, which is cut through in the centre by the Bosphorus. These promontories are of equal length. We were now proceeding along the southern shore of the Asiatic one, and running east by south, in the exact direction of the line right through Asia Minor to Baghdad.

We had our usual fine weather, and nothing could exceed the loveliness of the landscape. Hills covered with the vine rose on our left as we held our way along the shores of the silvery Marmora, studded with the

Princes Islands and others; beyond lay the lofty mountains of the Gulf of Ismid, which we were entering. We passed, on the shore, the ruins of old castles, long since deserted; and now the country to our left became woody and uncultivated as we entered the Gulf of Ismid. About half way to that place the train stopped, and we were soon wandering into some gardens or orchards of walnut, mulberry, and other trees, close by what was once an immense factory for silk-weaving, part of which had been burnt down. There was a pretty river of fresh water flowing down from the hills into the sea, which had been utilised for working the looms by water-power: this was once a silk-weaving factory, where the most lovely rich furniture brocades were woven for the Turkish palaces: specimens were shown us, but all was in decay. One loom still possessed a piece of work which had been commenced, and abandoned—all testifying to that which was foremost in everybody's mouth, the financial decay of the Ottoman Empire. We emerged from the roofless, floorless, vast halls of this deserted factory, into an arbour, where a lofty walnut afforded grateful shade, to find a most sumptuous *déjeuner* laid out for our benefit, on a rising ground beneath its wide-spreading branches. English, Turks, Greeks, Germans, and even a Japanese gentleman, participated in the feed, of whom Hamdy Bey represented the progress Mahomedanism might make under the auspices of Europe.

Toasts were drunk to the progress of Turkey in European advancement, and to the prosperity of railway enterprise, and the hope that one day this line would meet our line of navigation in the Euphrates valley, which brought me into special notice.

After luncheon we still proceeded along the northern shore of the lovely Gulf of Ismid. The mountains rose close by now on the opposite shore. Numerous fishing-boats sped their way towards Constantinople, over the breezy but calm waters, their white sails giving life to the scene, until about 4 p.m. we pulled up at the terminus, at a conical hill covered with poor, wretched houses. Here we found, on a small plateau in front of us, another deserted palace, to the interior of which we obtained access through a window, as there was not even a domestic in charge. The ornamental work on the walls, the brocades and tapestries, were in the most wretched state of decay, and we pronounced that it was useless to visit the intricate labyrinth of streets of the village, particularly as the sun was darting his afternoon rays down the already heated valley. Ismid, however, is famous for a flax-spun shirting of a peculiar gauze-like texture, cool, strong, and prettily barred in its weaving; which, I believe, is the work of the Armenians. Hamdy Bey had quietly started off to secure some of this, very likely pretending some Pasha required it. We waited for nearly an hour, and could not make out what had become of him, when we saw him

with a lot of this stuff careering down a narrow lane towards us. This caused a serious delay, and we did not arrive at Haidar Pasha until an hour after sunset, and instead of a steamer, had to cross the sea in barges, reaching Misserie's Hotel at 8 p.m.

These distractions were very salutary and consoling; they occupied the mind, preventing it from brooding over one's powerlessness and from the fatal idleness of despair, and replaced such feelings with others more pleasing, with companions who felt and sympathised; and even the ruins, the very stones and deserted palaces, cried out, 'There is nothing to be done under the present *régime* !'

Strolling along the High Street of Pera I met a Dragoman of our Embassy, Mr. Prezioso, whose father had been a Peryote artist. He was quite at home with himself and all the world, and pulled his long black moustache with all the diplomatic *sang-froid* air of which he was capable. He informed me that our affair—in fact, English affairs in general—had a smell which offended his Majesty the Sultan; which was a translation of a Persian expression, *Bu Dared*, with which he knew I was familiar, and which went far to convince me that in such hands, and with such assistants, the affair must be given up; which was confirmed at a subsequent visit to Lord Dufferin, who expressed his utter inability to do at present anything further in the matter, but that it should command his attention whenever a change in our



relations with the Sultan's Government took place. So I took my passage in a French steamer for Marseilles.

The Sultan, who had now despotically taken the affairs of his empire into his own hands, became entirely changed in his feelings towards England at this juncture. Hitherto, although commercial jealousy and the rivalry of foreign powers and correspondents endeavoured to *entraver* British enterprise, still the Turkish Government felt, and very justly so, that their prosperity depended on the power of England and the mutual interests of both countries; and the liberal policy of her great ally, Ali Pasha, the last of her great ministers, felt that British influence and trade, permeating through every part of the Ottoman Empire, was a source of strength and the best means of civilising its remote provinces; and if these counsels were adopted, and his representations attended to, we should have heard no more of rapacious pashas and ruined rayahs. The people would be enriched and protected, and the vast trade of their rich gold-producing lands be developed; first by those in possession of the means, and then by the natives joining them. This had always been the great object, as set forth in a letter to the *Levant Herald*, in October 1873, called forth by the malevolent attacks of the foreign usurers and minions of those very Pashas who could not hope for bribes from us. As a specimen of the production of such brutes

who live on while they flatter and conduce to their debauches, I may mention one of the enterprises applauded by them, which was to upset legitimate British trade: the word used is 'concurrence.' The Pasha of Baghdad wishing, the letter says, to open a direct trade between London and Baghdad, induced the Porte to buy the *Babel*. A Jewish Missionary convert is sent to London to purchase. Here was a fine field for picking 100,000*l.* expenditure, and a vessel unfit in every way, which was laid up in the Arsenal at Constantinople shortly after. This is one of many, and with such magnates to contend with I represented, in the letter above alluded to, that since the establishment of our line of steamers the revenue of the Pashalik of Baghdad, from about 100,000*l.* a-year, was raised to over 500,000*l.*

Were the Pashas of Baghdad less rapacious, less fanatical, and more patriotic, they would have hugged European, and particularly English enterprise, and acted very differently from the narrow view lately given in the *Eastern Express*, from one of their minions, saying of me, 'If Mr. Lynch brought out from England a steam-pump to raise water from the Tigris, without having obtained a concession for an enterprise which was at once beneficial to the country; the Government on that occasion merely confiscated the machine, paying him the cost out of its pockets, rather than allow him to reap the benefit exclusively of working it. This action on the part of the

authorities might at first sight seem surprising, but on examining the question more closely one sees in it nothing astonishing; the Ottoman Government, like any other, is anxious not to throw difficulties in the way of irrigating the fields, but to see that the service is so conducted that there shall not be a preponderance of contractors in proportion to the population.'

I must apologise for the length of this extract; but it is such a specimen of what bribery and corruption aim at, that I felt I should give the full paragraph. According to its view, instead of 'preponderance of contractors,' there should be a preponderance of bribery and heavily burdened concessions, and these so under control that each Pasha could live; and thus the fields are to be irrigated. The pumps in question were never used, but sent off to the Government stores, as a warning that, contrary to the Imperial firman for the encouragement of agriculture, allowing even foreigners to introduce agricultural machines, that that firman was a myth, and Namyk Pasha must first be dealt with.

All internal traffic, agricultural development, and navigation, must, of course, be conducted under the laws of the State; every enterprise which tends to develop its resources and give employment to its people should, under the above restrictions, be nursed and encouraged, whether promoted by natives or foreigners. Natives having equal intellect and capacity will replace the foreign-speaking element, and those

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of the foreigners who remain and fuse with the people often become the best servants of the State. These principles being adopted, no monopolies or private concessions allowed, the best horse will win. This policy would have saved the Turkish Empire, its vast resources have been developed, and its just and liberal *prestige* have rallied the nations of the world around her, protecting her while they were protecting their own *amour propre* and interests.

Ever since the enlightened rule of Raschid Pasha the local authorities of Baghdad have exerted themselves in endeavouring to injure enterprises which he encouraged and imitated, and many great works were about to be undertaken under our mutual auspices when he was taken, away to be succeeded by Pashas of a different stamp, who saw in fanaticism and bribery the only mode of adding to their popularity and increasing their private wealth. They abhorred foreign enterprise, from which they could obtain no baksheesh, and even their own people would not enter into works of utility without that assistance and protection from them which intercourse with foreigners would legitimately secure.

As long as political interests were to be served, these narrow representations of the Governors at Baghdad, luckily for Turkish interests, found no support at Constantinople; so the carrying trade of Baghdad increased, and its revenues flourished, but Turkish reverses and loss of provinces at home,

owing to misgovernment, led to the bag-and-baggage declaration, to the Dulcigno affair, and interference in Egypt, which caused the Sultan to fear treachery, and that we had cast in our lot with his enemies. These feelings were soon made available, large bribes from the Jewish communities to get possession of our line were made to our friends, and backed up by foreign intrigue, a peremptory order was sent, early in July 1881, to stop the English navigation of the Tigris and Euphrates from the Gulf to Baghdad, than which, considering the large interests concerned, and the interruption to trade, nothing could be more ill-timed or reprehensible.

Her Majesty's Government protested to the Turkish Ambassador in London, and through Her Majesty's Embassy at Constantinople, against this arbitrary action of the Vali of Baghdad in forcibly stopping the traffic of the Company's steamers, and reserved all rights against the Porte for the consequences, but it required a month's consideration to move the Turk to revoke the prohibition on the 1st August, 1883, after immense losses were sustained.

The obstruction, now after nearly fifty years, placed by the Turkish Government against our navigating the Tigris, on the wretched plea that it was not mentioned in an original Firman, does not in any way affect our prescriptive rights, for it is evident that the privileges enjoyed during the fifty years, as above shown, depend not merely on the words used in or omitted from the

concession of 1834, but on the interpretation put on that instrument by constant and recognised usage, and by the obvious and necessary meaning and intention of the document, as shown by the language of a subsequent vizirial letter and official papers referring to the vessels running between Baghdad and Bussoreh.

It must be borne in mind that the Tigris is a tributary of the Euphrates, and enters that river by several narrow channels, and has no *embouchure* in the Persian Gulf, and by all maritime nations the line of commerce from the Persian Gulf to Baghdad was known by the general term of 'Up the Euphrates.'

Under all the foregoing circumstances, not to mention others of a more detailed but equally favourable character, and which are doubtless recorded in Her Majesty's Foreign Office, I feel confident that the British Government will not assent to their being interfered with, large sums having been expended, and towards the promotion of which numerous British subjects have subscribed, in full reliance upon the assurances of the British and Turkish Governments, and in full reliance further on their own prescriptive rights, based on almost immemorial usage; and I may, without the gift of prophecy, venture to state, that this first effort of British commerce will be the pioneer of a new era of civilisation and prosperity.

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